

MINISTRY  
to  
DIVORCED AND SEPARATED  
in a  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

A Professional project  
presented to  
the Faculty of the  
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
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May 1983

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Time has gone full circle and the end of this project brings me back to all those people who have been with me on my journey towards its completion. I would like to thank all of them for their encouragement and their patience. Time and space, however, do no allow me to call them all by name; but these few I will mention for their special help.

I would like to thank Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Los Angeles, for his permission and his financial support of my work. My thanks also to my pastor, Monsignor William Barry, for his interest and concern and to my confrere, Fr Dennis Marrell, for helping me learn the intricacies of a word processor. The first drafts of the project were typed by Virginia Bartling, Linda Daigle, Cathi Davidson, Brenda Griffin, Jan Hammit and Judy Skapic. My thanks to them and to Sr Seraphine who so generously helped with her time and organisational skills.

The work would not have reached this stage without the participation of so many of the Phoenix Group. I thank them, too, and know I owe them more than words can say. Most of all I thank Fr Jose Lopez and Sr Grace Luther who were with me in the formative days. Finally, and with gratitude for his help, I thank my advisor, Dr Paul Schurman.

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## ABSTRACT

The project which I have undertaken, entitled Ministry to Divorced and Separated in a Roman Catholic Parish, is an attempt to design an outreach specifically tailored to the needs of those in the Church whose marriages fail, or are failing.

Divorce has a special significance for Catholics. Besides the pain and emotional upheaval of a marital breakdown, the well-known teaching of the Church on marriage and its strong stand against remarriage, present the divorcee with added spiritual and social problems. Ministry in the past to such people has been largely a sacramental one, especially through the continued reception of the Eucharist and Penance. But the reception of these sacraments did not meet other pressing personal and social needs, and the refusal of these sacraments on the occasion of remarriage made the plight of the person even more painful.

The first concern of the project was to recognise the special circumstances of the divorced, through a parish-wide series of sermons, pleading for understanding and acceptance. This was followed by an open invitation to all divorced to come to a special meeting, at which the formation of a support group was announced. The three-fold needs of the participants, the social, the personal and the religious, were to be of special concern. Regular weekly meetings were planned, as

well as home Masses and retreats at less frequent intervals. Guest speakers were invited to speak on topics relevant to the needs of the group, on the average of four times per year.

The major findings of the project can be summed up as follows. The divorced have a special need for recognition and love by the other church members. On their part, their pain has a great deal to teach us about the redeeming nature of suffering in a christian context. The Church in the past has not given enough attention to this, while a better understanding of its history, coupled with the insights of Scripture and the practice of other christian churches, could give the Catholic Church a greater flexibility in ministering to the divorced and separated.

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

## GENESIS OF PROJECT

January 25, 1959, was like any other day of that month in Dublin. A cold wind blew from the east and the seemingly endless cloud cover once more blotted out the winter sun as it had done for so many days already. There was little to report and what was reported seemed of little significance. Life went on as before. I was a seminarian then and in something less than two years I would be ordained. But even that thought had to give way to more pressing matters. There were classes to be attended and papers to be researched. Even the election of a pope barely three months before had already faded into history and even from our minds. Everybody knew that Pope John XXIII was really a "caretaker" pope, elected to give the Church a chance to catch its breath after the long and eventful pontificate of the late Pope Pius XII. The real question, because of John XXIII's advanced age, was who the next pope would be. An old man of seventy six could not be expected to be an innovator. His task was to assure continuity with the past and that past, so it seemed then, was rather reassuring. Meantime, it was to be business as usual.

Nobody was really ready for the announcement from Rome that

same cold, January day. The unexpected had happened, so unexpected, in fact, that almost everybody was caught by surprise. The aging pope had just made known his intention to convoke an Ecumenical Council, the twenty first in the history of the Church and the first in almost one hundred years. It was to be called the Second Vatican Council, after the First Vatican Council of (1869-1870). Most of us had only vague notions about an Ecumenical Council from our studies in history and theology. My classmates and I rushed to check our notes. The consensus was that this would be a resounding non-event. There seemed then such little need to question a faith that was already settled and secure. Besides, what was the need to disturb the peace of mind of the people? We all looked on the news as an unnecessary "shaking of the foundations" of their faith. Most of us, if we thought much of the news at all, surmised that the council would merely serve to reaffirm the age-old beliefs and doctrines and canonize the ancient practices. We soon returned to our studies and to our more normal pursuits. In a short time even the upcoming council no longer formed part of our conversation.

As time passed, however, various news reports from Rome gave us to understand that the preparatory work for the Council was going on apace. By the fall of 1959 a new professor of theology had come to the seminary, after completing his doctoral studies in the Eternal City. He brought with him some new ideas and different approaches to some age-old

questions, questions that we had thought were long ago answered and duly filed away. We began to sense that new and sometimes exciting questions were being asked in the Church and novel solutions were being proposed. Life was becoming rather exciting. Men of my age group felt that it was now possible to question the old ways, not just repeat the ancient answers. But we were more products of our age than we realized. We did not challenge the basic assumptions, the foundations of our beliefs, and only tentatively did we venture out into the much larger areas of possible or judicious choice. In June of 1961 I was ordained. I felt secure and had a place and an understanding of myself and of my role as a priest. In a word, I was "set" for life. Or that is what I thought.

Almost unknown to myself, however, changes had been taking place in my life and my ways of thinking. The externals were still the same. Latin was still the language of the Church and everybody, including me, seemed to know where he or she stood. The first signs of change for me had really appeared when the young professor from Rome had enquired of me how my course on marriage was going. I assured him that everything was progressing very well. I went on to add that I considered myself fortunate to have as my tutor an old and much respected canon lawyer. He raised his eyebrows in surprise and wondered aloud at the wisdom of treating marriage from the perspective of canon (Church) law. To me that had seemed

an ideal way to deal with the whole question of marriage. Law was clear and distinct and its rulings were precise and final. The tools of the lawyer allowed him to cut through the maze of conflicts that always seemed to surround matters of husband/wife relationships. I was happy with that approach and with a system that was neat and organized. I was not alone in that attitude; the people in my class, and in the Church, so it seemed, echoed my sentiments. Within a short period I was soon to learn the shortcomings of my knowledge of marriage, when I was assigned to a large urban parish in Los Angeles.

Life in a parish, I was soon to find out, was not so easily confined within the niceties of Church Law. People still fell in love and got married in accord with the dictates of law as I had learned they should. But some marriages did not work out. People got divorced, some remained single, while some others remarried outside of the Church, sacraments and law. Among the last, many still attended church regularly and brought up wonderful families. I still remember the shock I felt when told that one of the most outstanding members of my first parish was actually a divorcee who had remarried. This was an earthshaking revelation for me. Life did not, despite all my dreams and expectations, imitate law.

During this time, too, Vatican II had been convened. Reports kept filtering though the news media suggesting that the

world I grew up in, the doctrines I had come to look upon as eternal and immutable, were not, after all, beyond critical scrutiny. Pope John XXIII, it was said, in response to some of his critics who took exception to his open-minded approach to ecclesial matters, had answered that he only wished to open the windows of the Church so that the winds might blow through and give it a good airing. And I who had once bundled myself against the winds from off the Irish sea, now found myself seeking protection from the storms that were then originating in Rome. It was a difficult time. The old landmarks were often lost to my sight beyond the waves whipped up by these ever-strengthening storms. I knew then how apt was Matthew's image of the Church as a ship caught in a sudden squall, while Jesus slept on unconcerned in the prow. I, too, at times felt like crying out as did the apostles, "Lord, save us! We are lost!"(Mt 8:23-27.NAB)

The net result of all this was to make it almost impossible for me to chart a "safe" course through life. Treacherous shoals began to appear where the ancient maps assured me that none were to be found. Some of my confreres floundered in the storm and left the ministry. I did not, of course, judge them but mourned only the loss of their companionship. They, too, had experienced with me the loss of a once stable world and had sought new answers, but in a context different from mine.

All of these personal struggles, I slowly realized, had taken place in a world which was also struggling for new meanings and other directions for itself. But, as so often happens with one's own struggles, it takes a long time before the conflicts that others are going through become obvious. I had long acted as if the world and its people were not touched by these changes. In that I was very much like many of my fellow priests. It took a long time before what is now an obvious state of affairs became evident and could be admitted by us. Just recently the U.S. Catholic bishops said that "Everyone knows that the world today is significantly different from the one of even fifteen or twenty years ago...Distinctively challenged today, of course, is the priest. Sometimes it seems to him that the whole sense of direction of his priesthood has changed."(1)

Some four years ago my life did change. I had taken a sabbatical leave and had gone away to update my studies in the fields of theology, scripture and the social sciences. I was happy to learn new and much-needed skills for working in the ministry. The results were astonishing. I quickly learned that old truths had to be relearned so that they could fit better into the context of a greatly changed world. One of

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1.The Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, The Priest and Stress (Washington: U.S.Catholic Conference, 1982) p. 5. From a European who studied here, see Emile Pin, S.J., "Priestly Function in Crisis" , in The Identity of the Priest (New York: Paulist Press, 1969), pp. 45-58.

those areas calling for new understandings and new approaches was that of the divorced and separated in the Church. To that point I had always given the response to those whose marriages had failed that nothing, or at least very little, could be done for them. It was a difficult response to give, but the only one that was possible in the circumstances. I had never thought that the divorced and the separated, precisely because they suffered so much, could offer a great service to the Church. One of my teachers was a woman whose marriage of some twenty years had only recently broken up. I know now that it was precisely her teaching, not about divorce, but as a divorced person that struck me most forcibly. She had a gift to offer her Church and her own understanding of divorce from a lived experience was for me something that no theory could match. I became a learner, not a teacher. It was a new and disconcerting experience, but I sensed that there was something very important to be learned from her. I decided then to pursue the matter of divorce and separation when I returned to my parish. But how or what to do I did not yet know.

Two other events were to prove crucial in my final decision to begin a ministry to divorced and separated. I was already convinced of the worthwhile nature of such work, but I still needed something more to give flesh and sinew to the mere bones of my convictions. One day one of the priests in the parish, Fr Jose Lopez, confided in me that his own sister

had been divorced. He, too, wondered what could be done for those who had gone through a like experience. We discussed the matter together and decided to bring to the parish at large the possibility of forming a group here for those who had gone through a divorce or a separation. We clearly saw the need for such an organisation, but we feared the reaction of the people and the possibility that they might accuse us of fostering a lack of commitment to the notion of permanence in marriage. After all, the Church's position on divorce is so very well known and clearly documented. Any attempt to find a place for these people, other than a silent one in the pews, we felt would lead to a great amount of dissension. These reservations were weighty and caused us a great deal of mental turmoil. The matter was finally resolved when I heard that my own sister was in the process of being divorced from her husband. This was a great shock to me and one for which I was totally unprepared. I could easily deal, or almost so, with divorce in other people's families, and could quote the appropriate rules from Church sources. But divorce within my own family was quite another matter. When I recovered from the initial shock, I shared my thoughts with Jose. We decided to go ahead with our plans, whatever the reaction would be. We still had our misgivings, but the awareness of sharing a common pain with others in similar situations helped us to overcome our hesitation. We decided to form a group and learn from doing. There was really very little to go on from outside sources and the only choices available to us were to

take our first hesitant steps alone or to abandon the project altogether. This latter course did not seem a very good way of solving what we both admitted was a great problem indeed.

We picked a Sunday to make our announcement and planned to give our efforts maximum coverage. The reaction of the people was very encouraging and very much better than we had anticipated. There was none of the outcry that we had expected. In fact, some said that such a move was long overdue and offered us their blessing and support. We were on our way! But I shall leave the details of what we did until a later chapter, when I will deal at greater length with the setting up of a ministry to the divorced and separated in a Catholic parish.

I prefer, at this point, to deal with the "statement of the problem," a definition of the major terms and a brief summary of the contents of the remaining chapters.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Any treatment of the question of ministry to divorced and separated by a Roman Catholic priest must of necessity take into account his own feelings. His feelings will often run very deep, sometimes at levels beyond immediate and conscious recall. Disclosure is often a problem because it is not seen as a problem, and in this we are like so many other men. In the words of Clayton Barbeau, "Perhaps most crucial to our growth as men is that we learn to take risks of disclosing ourselves to those we love."(2) By his training and his life style, a priest is not always well equipped to deal with problems where emotions run high. He is called to be a public representative of the Church. In that context, his personal feelings must often be put in the background. His office defines him, both as he sees himself and as others see him. This, of course, can be considered an asset, though its usefulness has to be carefully qualified.(3)

On the experiential level, too, the priest has other hurdles

2. Clayton Barbeau, Delivering the Male (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1982), p.47. This book is directed mainly to the male who marries and, though often over-stated, can also be applied to the priest. For a treatment of the same topic , from the viewpoint of the priest as a caring leader, see Dean R. Hoge, Converts, Dropouts, Returnees: A Study of Religious Change among Catholics (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981), pp.167-171.

3. Don S. Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976). I have found this book very useful for an understanding of priestly ministry.

to cross. He does not marry. This fact cuts him off from a lived understanding of what it means to share his life closely with a woman in a marriage relationship. It is true, of course, that most priests come from happy and well integrated families and have a deep appreciation of the happiness to be found in such a community. But their not being married does force them often to rely upon generalizations and ideals gleaned from biblical and other spiritual models. The ideal seldom dovetails perfectly with the real and the tendency to see couples as perfectly matched pairs does have very practical implications for the celibate involved in pastoral ministry. The leap to a better understanding of married life is not, of course, entirely beyond the capabilities of a priest, since there are many points where these different life styles share a common frontier. One priest has put it in these words, "My life may have as many moments of intimacy as theirs (married people's), but I don't believe I have ever experienced the depth of intimacy as they have... I have not found Him in intimate moments as concretely as I have found Him in lonely moments."<sup>(4)</sup> Perhaps it is this last point, the experience that comes from aloneness, that could act as a bridge for the priest in his efforts to minister to the divorced. I have found in my own work with divorced and separated that this common experience of apartness gives me easier access to their world.

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4. Keith Clark, An Experience of Celibacy: A Creative Reflection on Intimacy, Loneliness, Sexuality and Commitment (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1982), p.56.

In the whole area of his intellectual preparation, as I have intimated in the account of my own schooling above, the priest is not too well prepared for the break-up of marriage that is now such a feature of parish life. Both intellectually and spiritually he is highly committed to the continuing-in-being of a marriage relationship. In the medieval world there was added to the triple vow of the monk (the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience) the vow of stability. In fact, one of the writers of the period coined the phrase, "ubi stabilitas, ibi religio" (where there is stability, there religion is to be found), to point out how important for the monk was the notion of constancy-in-commitment.(5) While this last-named vow was primarily intended for the monk, nonetheless, its demand also embraced the life of the priest-in-the-world and even the lives of married couples. Historically and in fact the Church has always fostered stability. It is clear that her efforts have not met with complete success and surely never will. Divorce, then, poses spiritual as well as intellectual difficulties for the priest. How can he, it has been asked of me often and with some vehemence, at one and the same time teach about the indissolubility of marriage, prepare people for such a commitment, sacramentalize their vowed unions, and not appear contradictory when he openly supports those who divorce?

5. Helen Waddell, The Wandering Scholars (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1954) p.182. The chapter from which this is taken deals with the strong measures the Church used against wandering clerics, thereby indicating its high regard for a stable, committed life.

Such a question is, of course, motivated by concerns other than the spiritual; but the priest must first face these challenges within himself before he can be free to face them in others.(6)

I have to this point addressed the problem of divorce and separation from the perspective of the priest, before that of the people most immediately involved, the divorced and separated. I do not mean to suggest that our concern should primarily be directed toward him. Far from it. I only mean to point out that the priest is a rather key figure in the development of a parish ministry to these people. Unless this work has his support, at least at this time in the Church's history, not much can be done to further its cause. As Robert Leslie reminds us, a meeting at church, with its obvious implication of official approval, "indicates (also) a religious commitment."(7) Once the priest sees a value in ministry to the divorced and separated, and can honestly face his own misgivings and deep-seated fears, really worthwhile work can be undertaken.

One could add that this development has come not a moment too

6. Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp 262-263. For a good treatment of the priest as a healer who shares his people's hurts, see Henri J.M. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society (Garden City: Image Books, 1979).

7. Robert C. Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p.45.

soon. In the past, the response of the Church has been largely one of denial. Divorce was treated as a taboo subject most of the time. If dealt with openly, more often than not it was looked upon as an act of faithlessness. This made the pain of the divorced persons more intense because of the rejection by such an important part of their spiritual and social support group. The pain of rejection by the church was but another burden to bear. We in positions of leadership simply did not appreciate the nature of this loss. Mel Krantzler put it poignantly: "What I hadn't known until I experienced it myself was what divorce felt like. Until then I couldn't appreciate the paralysing impact that a feeling of failure combined with sudden 'aloneness' can produce."(8) All too often the Church's response failed to take into consideration so many of the factors of modern life that cause stress among families such as personality disorders, job relocation, long periods of unemployment, the deaths of children and the like. And through our not taking into account such matters "we may have fallen into the trap of blaming the victims."(9)

Probably the single most telling reason for considering the question of divorced and separated a matter of the utmost urgency has been the dramatic increase in marital breakdown.

8. Mel Krantzler, Creative Divorce: A New Opportunity for Personal Growth (New York: Evans, 1973), p.5.

9. James R. Young, CSP, (ed.), Ministering to the Divorced Catholic (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p.11.

The statement "until death do us part" is now so much more in the nature of a wish than a statement of intent. As Catholics, we used to take for granted that a lifetime commitment would almost always be assured. I remember a priest from Holland once telling me that in his local town, which was equally divided between Catholics and Protestants, it used to be possible to tell the one part from the other because the Catholic children had always the same names as their fathers. This is no longer the case. It is obviously less true in this country. Up until the 1970's the rate of divorce among Catholics in the U.S. trailed the national norm. Now it is about equal to the other groups. Nationwide the divorce rate has doubled. For every two marriages today there is one divorce. Those who marry at the age of nineteen or under have only one chance in five of having a life-long union.(10) The statistics are chilling and the toll in human suffering is truly frightening. To say that the Church is faced with a problem is to underestimate the pressing need for an urgent and concrete response.

We must not be disheartened, however, because the problems we face today are no greater than the problems the Church has faced so often before in her long history. We need new ways of understanding who we are and how we should go about the

10. Arie Press and others, "Divorce American Style," Newsweek, (Jan 10, 1983), 42-48. Thomas McKenzie, "Divorce: Rerooting the Family Tree," U.S. Catholic, 47 (September, 1982) ,5-9.

task of serving our people. In this next section I shall define the terms of that service as I see them.

## DEFINITION OF MAJOR TERMS

Ministry

Ministry is a form of leadership. I will use the term to cover any kind of Christian initiative that a person takes to meet the demands of a particular situation. This initiative will arise out of the awareness that a member, any member, of the Christian community has that he or she possesses a gift to be shared with others. This notion finds an appropriate biblical expression in the words of St Paul that "each of us has received God's favor in the measure in which Christ bestows it."(Eph 4:7) Paul then goes on from here to specify the gifts granted to the people for the support of thier own communities. He lists them this way: "It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ."(Eph 4:11-12) Obviously these gifts were historically conditioned by the needs of Paul's time. It is our task today, I believe, to find appropriate ministries for the needs that we have. I shall deal more fully with the history of ministry within the Church in the next chapter. Right now, however, I will be content to state that the ministry in which I am especially interested is that leadership which members of the divorced and separated group offer each other.

Divorced and Separated

The group which we formed at this parish is open to those whose divorces are final and to those who are presently separated from their spouses. In the latter case divorce may not be a consideration. We have found that some people need to "sort out" their feelings toward marriage. The purpose of the group is to give such people a forum in which they can express their feelings and hopefully find new and better ways of coping. Reconciliation is the goal here.

Some of the spouses who attend have already moved out of their homes. Others are still living with their spouses but are experiencing a psychological and emotional separation. We try to be non-judgmental in all cases and as supportive as we can. We have found also that the widowed have at times gained needed support in our group. But we have found it best to limit ourselves officially to marital situations, while leaving our group as open as possible to any others who may need our support.

Roman Catholic

Though Roman Catholics share a common Baptism with other Christian churches, they do have views on marriage and divorce that are distinctive. These differences are of such a nature that I thought it better to limit my project to

Roman Catholics alone. For instance, obedience as a moral category is more highly stressed among Catholics than among other Christian denominations. As a consequence, "to break the rules" has implications for us that it does not have for members of other faiths. In practice, however, members of other Christian churches attend our group. But the decision to limit the group's efforts within the Roman Catholic tradition makes our efforts more focused and my project more manageable.

### Parish

The parish is the basic geographical unit in the Roman Catholic Church. Its boundaries are clearly defined and the parish church and related facilities are the normal gathering point for the parish members. I stress the word "normal" because some members go to churches other than their own parish church. The original intent of a parish was to provide an easily accessible place for the people. As transportation became more available, especially the family car, the proximity of the local parish became less important. Many members choose a church today more on the basis of personal preference than upon its location. In the case of the group which I shall discuss, the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, Claremont, is the parent organization. Many members in fact, come from surrounding parishes. For most Catholics, the name "parish" has a readily identifiable

meaning and its location provides ample parking as well. Besides, the use of parish facilities serves as a visible sign of acceptance by the larger community and also affords a much appreciated validation of the members' efforts. Support of, and acceptance by, the parish gives the group opportunities to take part in functions from which they might otherwise be excluded, or feel excluded.

There are about twenty five hundred families on our parish register. Other unregistered members could raise that total by about five hundred. Although I have no definite information on the number of divorced and separated in this parish, even the most sanguine estimate would indicate that a great amount of work needs to be done.

#### PREVIOUS WORK IN THIS FIELD

Ministry to the divorced and separated is a relative newcomer to the Catholic scene. There always has been some broad-based ministry addressed to these people, but nothing tailored to their specific needs was systematically pursued. The concern of the Church was usually mediated through counselling and the sacramental ministrations of the priest. As I indicated above, the first reaction to the increasing divorce rate was one of shock followed by denial. After that, programs were started with the express intention of bolstering family life. It was something in the nature of preven-

tive medicine. But the disease had already spread too far to be successfully treated by such methods. The problem had to be faced squarely and on its own terms. A specific ministry to the divorced and separated had to be initiated.

"One of the first organizations for divorced Catholics was put together in Boston in the fall of 1971." (11) Today about two thirds of the dioceses in the United States have departments which correlate the efforts of their various parishes in ministering to the divorced. There are now over five hundred support groups and even a national organization and a monthly magazine called "Jacob's Well." (12) In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, of which this parish is a part, programs are coordinated through the Family Life Bureau. These programs had their origins in the early 1960's, when divorced people were asked to assist in the preparation of pre-marriage courses. Their expertise, especially their insights into those conditions that militate against marital happiness, was seen as an asset of great significance. From this a grass roots movement evolved which resulted in the formation, about 1965, of separate groups for both men and women. These were respectively called the Society of Catholic Men and the Fabiolas. The limitation of keeping the sexes apart soon became apparent and these groups no longer exist. In 1972, a separate department was founded with special em-

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11. Young, p. 3.

12. Ibid., pp. 3-12.

phasis on ministry to the divorced and separated. Still, only about twenty of the two hundred and eleven parishes in this diocese have special divorced-related groups. When one realizes that there are about 2.2 million Catholics involved, with a divorce rate estimated at 15-20%, the importance and enormity of the task is at once apparent.

I have given a brief summary of the work previously undertaken on the diocesan and national levels. Here in this parish, as I said earlier, I have been involved in work among the divorced and separated. My first experience was with a fellow priest, Fr. Jose Lopez. This was almost three years ago. After he left in the fall of 1981, Sr. Grace Luther, a professor in the Department of Counseling and Family Guidance at St. Mary's College, San Antonio, took his place. She worked with me for the duration of the school year, 1981-82. Since then I have been the sole clerical coordinator of the program. In chapter four, I shall give a more detailed account of the work and progress of our ministry since its inception.

#### METHODS AND LIMITATIONS OF PROJECT

It is my intention to present in this project a model of ministry to the divorced and separated within the Catholic Church. Although the working-out of this project is in this parish, I have hopes that some of its lessons can be applied

elsewhere.

I have already given a personal history of my own growing awareness of a need for such a ministry. It was not my intention to push myself into the limelight for purposes of self aggrandisement, but rather to point out that my own experience was germane to the whole process. It is my belief that certain ministries (and work among the divorced and separated is surely one of them) can be born only after some dramatic and personal experience. Theory is seldom innovative; experience is more often a father to the thought. At least is was so in my case.

The second chapter, The Church and the Divorced, will look back for biblical and theological precedents for such work as I have undertaken. Although at first sight ideas may seem to spring, Athena-like, from the teeming brain, this is not really so. They need a genealogy so that we can give them a name and fit them into a context. That is why I shall briefly sketch the history of ministry within the Church and its relevance today in responding to the needs of the divorced and separated. If it is true that history frees us, then I hope to show that a more flexible approach to questions of marriage and divorce fits well within the long years of the Church's growth toward self understanding.

The third chapter, Models of Minstry to Divorced and

Separated, will look to the fields of counseling and group dynamics, to see how they can prove fertile soil for both biblical and theological ideas. Later in this same chapter I shall sketch out how our group struggled with these ideas, sometimes with success, sometimes only to fail.

The fourth chapter, as its name suggests, How to Set Up a Group, will present a how-to approach. I hope to include here an account of some of the programs we initiated. In a real sense, this chapter will be a presentation of my efforts to apply in concrete instances what I studied and learned during my whole Doctorate in Ministry course.

The final chapter, The Freedom of the Spirit, will contain some reflections on the future, in the light of my past experience. I will quickly review what was said in the previous chapters, indicate how I applied theological and pastoral care insights, and conclude with some thoughts on the directions the Church of the future will take in its response to the needs of its divorced and separated members.

As I indicated earlier, and as the name of the project indicates, I will limit my topic to a ministry within the Roman Catholic tradition. Although all of my work experience has been in Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Claremont, it is my hope that others will benefit from what I have learned with and been taught by others.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE CHURCH AND THE DIVORCED

The Church's approach to marriage has always been problematic. Ever since Jesus laid down the high demand, "Let no man separate what God has joined "(Mt 19:6), the claims of the ideal have clashed head-on with the realities of life. Marriages are entered into, some survive, some break up. So often family life seems to be in jeopardy . And yet the hope remains. Somehow the Church seems to say, we must not let the vision fade. The Christian is caught in the tension between the now and the not-yet. In biblical terms, life is lived out in the Kingdom that Jesus came to inaugurate here on earth, and not in the Kingdom that will achieve its final form in the life to come.

The Catholic Church today is uncompromising in its stand on the question of the indissolubility of marriage entered into between baptized persons. Perhaps that is one of its best-known teachings. In fact, I have found this teaching so well known that it ends up being distorted. Many think, for instance, that Catholics cannot divorce, and, if they do, they are thereby excommunicated, or at least barred from receiving Holy Communion. These notions are mistaken. But in the circumstances, they are quite understandable. One of the reasons for the high visibility of the Church's

teaching on marriage and divorce is that the legal aspects of matrimony figure largely in the way the Church trains candidates for the priesthood. In dealing also with cases where annulments are sought, there is a high degree of dependence upon law as a determining factor in the outcome of the case. Such an approach serves well the proper administration of justice in matrimonial law - suits brought before the Church's tribunals. But, as a very well-known theologian has observed, "this is a fundamentally one-sided way of looking at marriage. By definition, it is bound to preserve silence on the subject of married love." (1)

This is not to say, of course, that law bypasses marriage as a living experience. But it does tend to give too structured an approach to marriage and does not leave adequate room, I believe, for the element of human love in marriage. Neither does it pay enough attention to the life stages of people, where giving and receiving are so much influenced by one's age and one's mental state. Nor does it leave sufficient space for a consideration of sociological factors that affect marriage. As an example of this approach, the New Catholic Encyclopedia devotes eleven columns (two columns per page) to the theology of marriage, fifteen columns to marriage as a social institution and thirty six columns to marriage and

1. Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), p. XXV.

church law. (2) The imbalance is rather striking.

#### HISTORICAL SURVEY

To be objective, however, one must place the present situation in its historical context. Law is really the distillation of a society's concerns in regulatory form. It looks to the past, studies it, evaluates its findings and seeks to ensure the future through legal prescription. Of necessity, law carries a great amount of the past as baggage. Church law is no different from other law, only that it seems at times that it does not jettison enough of what weights it down. Perhaps the same could be said for other legal systems.

"According to the evidence of a contemporary letter...Christian marriage was much the same as that of pagans."(3) The early Church seems to have accepted the normal practices of the day. It does not seem to have had reservations about recognizing marriages entered into before the civil magistrate, nor did it have a separate judicial system to settle marriage disputes. Marriage contracts were seen as family affairs and Christian fathers were regarded as having the responsibility for the Christian way of life for all the

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2. P.J. Reiss and others, "Marriage," New Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: McGraw Hill , 1967), IX, 258-294.

3. Schillebeeckx, p. 244. Much of what follows is based on this work.

household members. In such a situation, clerical intervention was deemed unnecessary. Where pagans were involved, "the clergy was only intent to point out that Christians should refrain from sacrifices."(4) In certain instances the Church first objected to particular pagan customs , such as the wearing of a wedding garland, though later on these practices were "baptized" and given a religious significance. About the fourth century we find evidence of prayers and blessings by priests on the occasion of marriage. Such a practice indicated a growing awareness by the bride and groom of the religious significance of their new way of life. But the ceremony still conformed to standard civil practice within the confines of the family circle. In those instances where a second marriage was contracted, the blessing of the priest was not given; in fact, such unions were looked upon with dismay.(5) To sum up, then, for the first millennium of the Church's existence, the blessing of a marriage by a priest was commonplace, appreciated by the people, but not required. "During the first ten centuries there was no obligation to receive it" (the blessing of the priest). (6)

During this same period, the Church spread among the many countries that now form modern Europe. The various tribes that then populated the area had different marriage customs

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4. Ibid., p. 247.

5. Ibid., p. 251.

6. Ibid., p. 255.

and different understandings of marriage. The Church was faced with the task of working out a synthesis of these, of integrating some aspects of the various cultures while modifying or rejecting others. It was almost by default, due mainly to the breakdown of the power of the king and the rise of the feudal system, that gave more power to the bishop. The Church found itself more and more involved in all aspects of the marriage rite. This was not an unmixed blessing. The issues involved were complex and the Church had a difficult time creating a well coordinated liturgy and a sound theological basis for a just appreciation of marriage. (7)

To complicate matters further, the Eastern Church was evolving its own theology of marriage. Because it understood the mandate of Jesus against divorce in a different sense, the Orthodox Church, while unequivocally on the side of permanence in marriage, allowed divorce and remarriage. An Orthodox canon lawyer says that "the principle of indissolubility is reiterated...in no uncertain terms by St. John Chrysostom... It follows that under ordinary circumstances a validly contracted marriage is dissolved only by physical death."(8) The key words here are "ordinary circumstances." Marriage is for the life of the partners, unless drastic changes in the relationship occur. These changes are to be

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7. *Ibid.*, pp. 259-343

8. Lewis J. Patsavos, "The Orthodox Position on Divorce," in James J. Young, CSP (ed), Ministering to the Divorced Catholic, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 51-52.

understood as bringing about the "spiritual death" of the union, so that the Church, in granting a divorce, merely recognizes something that has already taken place. The Church "formally recognizes that the legitimate marriage is without foundation and has been dissolved 'ipso facto'." (9) Remarriage is allowed by the Orthodox, on the basis of what is called "economy," a term which means that the Church will make good what is lacking in the life of the new partners. This is a more lenient position than that of the Roman Catholic Church and has the Church-as-community "cover" for its weaker members. "The Orthodox justify the intervention...by having recourse to what they call the economy, a principle whereby the Church supplies deficiencies in difficult cases."(10) However, the Orthodox Church shows a certain misgiving in this by limiting the display of joy during the remarriage ceremony. "Eastern Church tradition...tolerates second marriages and only with severity third marriages."(11)

Since the Council of Trent (1645-1663), when the legal prescriptions for marriage received their present form, the Church laid down the requirements that every marriage of a Catholic be witnessed by a priest and two witnesses. This was to counteract the common practice of clandestine

9. Ibid., p. 52.

10. Olivier Rousseau, O.S.B., "Divorce and Remarriage: East and West," in The Sacraments: An Ecumenical Dilemma (New York: Paulist Press, 1967), p. 115.

11. Ibid., p. 121-122.

marriages, where people contracted marriage without witnesses.

This last practice had led to a loss of control by the Church over the marriage contract, since the custom had made marriage largely an arrangement between the couples themselves. It also made it impossible for the Church to exercise what the authorities considered a legitimate, even necessary, control over the sacrament of marriage itself. There was also present here a reaction to the Reformers who sought to wrest the matter of marriage from the Church. The Reformers had looked to the time when the Church had been only peripherally involved in marriage. They saw in a return to the old ways an opportunity to break the hold that the Church had come to have on marriage. "These new historical insights came at a most opportune moment for the Reformers, who...(wished) to deny the Church's power of jurisdiction over marriage, and in the end to deny the sacramental nature of marriage."(12)

It is clear, then, that the Church's legal teaching on marriage and divorce has a long and complex history. As I indicated above, the Church's participation in the marriage process evolved from that of a merely spectator role, through an active participation, to a claim to exercise full control where any of its subjects is involved. If a full reform of

12. Schillebeeckx., p. 361.

Church marriage laws is to be sought, it will be very necessary to look at the practices of the other Christian churches. In this matter the practices and self-understanding of the Orthodox Church is very important. (13)

For the priest who ministers to the divorced and separated, Church marriage law poses certain difficulties. He is, as I indicated in the Introduction, the inheritor of a long tradition. If he sees Church marriage law only from the perspective of his own time, he will tend to be rigid. But where history casts its light on the question, he should tend to be less apodictic in his opinions. The struggles of the past should form a part of his own struggle toward understanding and certainly so in the decisions he reaches regarding the lives of those most immediately effected by marriage and divorce. But more on this later.

#### BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON MARRIAGE

History of itself will not give the final answer. Its function is to chronicle the events and ideas that shape our thinking and our ways of acting. We need to go deeper, to explore our roots, our spiritual heritage. We need now to

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13. Rousseau, op. cit., pp. 124-134. The author points out that the Duke of Venice, some of whose subjects were from the Greek tradition, appealed to the Council of Trent, asking that the "immemorial custom" of his subjects on marriage be recognised. His point was almost conceded. cf. also Henricus Denzinger, (ed) Enchiridion Symbolorum, (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), XXXVI, N. 977.

look to the Scriptures.

At the outset, one could say that Scripture gives us a two-level view of the world. People are called upon to be committed, dedicated, willing to "turn their back(s) on... father and mother." (Lk 14:26) At the same time there is a great compassion shown to the son who returns home after disgracing his family (Lk 16:11-32), and we are told of a God whose most outstanding characteristic is love (1 Jn 4:7-18). Scripture makes great demands while it makes provision for our weaknesses.

Catholics, like all Christians, find themselves caught in that tension. They are called to greatness, to a commitment where "not everyone can accept this teaching." (Mt 19:11) On the other hand, they know that they, too, are "earthen vessels." Nowhere, I think, is it more obvious that in the question of divorce and remarriage.

Scripture, for its part, is clear, almost from its very first lines, "that it is not good for the man to be alone." (Gen 2:18) (14). He needs a "suitable partner," one whom he can call "bone of (his) bones, flesh of (his) flesh" (Gen 2:23), one for whom he is willing to give up his closest ties,

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14. cf. Xavier Leon-Dufour, S.J.(ed.), Dictionary of Biblical Theology (New York: Desclée , 1967); John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Macmillan , 1965); The Jerome Biblical Commentary (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

(his mother and father) so that he may become "one body" with the other. And yet, this union is flawed both in itself and in its fruits as is clear from the story of the Fall and in the murder of Abel by his brother, Cain (Gen 3 and 4).

Other shortcomings were recognised by the law when, for instance, provisions for divorce were handed down by Moses (Deut 24:1-). For all that, "the highest tribute which is paid to marriage in the Old Testament is the adoption of...marriage as an image of the covenant union and love of Yahweh for Israel."(15)

In the New Testament, Jesus reaffirmed the older teaching on the absolute character of marriage and its indissolubility (Mt 19:1-9). As He makes this high demand, Jesus also hints of the limited character of marriage. It can blind a person to important decisions, when, for example, a man uses it to avoid the call of God (Lk 14:20), or when He says that it will not exist in the kingdom of God (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:35-). Yet here again, as in the Old Testament, marriage is used by Jesus to describe the delights of the heavenly banquet (Mt 9:15; 25:1-; Mk 2:19; Jn 3:29). Marriage, as I said before, combines elements of the imperfect now and the not-yet-achieved perfection of the life to come.

There is, very clearly, a certain tension, one might say an

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15. McKenzie.

ambiguity, in the biblical portrayal of marriage. Great and high hopes are held out for marriage in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. At the same time there is a definite indication that we ought to take a more modest look at it. There is the danger, I believe, of reading back into the picture of marriage our own wishes and dreams. This, as I indicated in the Introduction, is a particular danger for priests. I suspect that married people, who after all know marriage from the experiential dimension, view their calling and its potential for perfection in a less romantic light! If we had only read the scriptural texts more carefully and less dispassionately, we would have ended up with a more modest notion of what, for instance, the New Testament writers are saying to us on the subject of marriage. For there, "apart from the parables in which the kingdom of heaven is portrayed as a wedding feast, the Greek word 'gamos' (marriage) is, with only two exceptions (Heb 13:4; Jn 2:1-2), not used in the New Testament books with the primary meaning of marriage between human beings."(16) There is a danger of confusing the sign (marriage on earth) with what it points toward (heavenly glorification). There really is no heaven on earth!

#### MARRIAGE AS SACRAMENT

Throughout its long history, the Church has had ample time to reflect upon its experience. That is to say, it has had

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16. Schillebeeckx, p. 108.

plenty of opportunity to theologize. It has had to face many challenges, confront an ever-changing world and constantly attempt, like the head of the household, to "bring from (its) storeroom both the old and the new" (Mt 13:52). As I indicated above, the Church very early on saw marriage as especially significant for its people, even if it did not become deeply involved in the ceremonial coming together of man and woman, until well into its history. And it also took some time, though not as long, to specify God's saving presence in marriage as a sacramental one. That is one dimension of marriage that today plays a very significant role in the Church's response to the question of marriage and divorce. It would be well to look upon the development of this idea.

"The first time that a document of the Church referred to marriage as a sacrament was at a synod in Verona in 1184."(17) By the time of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), it was generally accepted belief that marriage was a sacrament that gave a special grace to couples. The use of the word "sacrament" goes a long way back beyond the time of Tertullian (166-230 A.D.). (18) What, then, is a sacrament, one might ask?

"In classical Latin, indissoluble obligations were referred

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17. Denzinger, M. 760, quoted by Young, p. 21.

18. Schillebeeckx, p. 285.

to by the word "sacramentum."(19) Even in its secular use the word had a religious significance. "According to Saint Augustine marriage was a "sacramentum" because it was indissoluble and inviolable, and therefore holy...a sacral bond of indissoluble obligations...a sign of the unity of Christ and His Church."(20) In that context, then, a sacrament shared, at its human level, in the nature of an oath and, at its religious level, in the making present, here and now and in a form for all to see, Christ's own presence to His people. Here the human and the divine meet, so that "to receive the sacraments of the Church (and marriage between baptized people is today one of the Church's seven sacraments) is...the same thing as to encounter Christ Himself."(21) The love a couple share, their lives together as husband and wife are shot through and through with the divine presence and is revealed through them to the world. Another Catholic theologian, when commenting on Paul's notion that our "bodies are for the Lord and the Lord is for the body" (1 Cor 6:12-20), says that the "sexual union is not merely a marginal erotic function, but...an entirely unique kind of self-revelation and self-commitment."(22) In these views, the whole human experience reveals God's presence in the world. The sacra-

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19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., pp. 285-286.

21. Edward Schillebeeckx,O.P., Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 54.

22. Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

ments to an even greater degree, do this in a unique and personal way. Each couple is a special revelation of God as He makes Himself known in love to His people.

All this is heady stuff. Marriage, as one of the seven sacraments for Catholics, is a very high calling religiously. Couples are to encounter Christ in each other and share His presence with the world around them. When their marriage breaks down, they not alone experience a social and emotional dislocation, they also have a need for a new spiritual and religious orientation. That is to say that their personal relation with God (their spiritual life) and their community-oriented life with Him (their religious life) need to find new reference points in the shattered landscape of their lives. There is a great and immediate need for the Church to be not just Magistra (teacher) but above all Mater (mother), when a marriage relationship fails. A supportive ministry is a must.

#### THE PRIEST AS MINISTER

The priest who takes on himself a ministry to the divorced and separated has also, as I said, a lot of baggage from the past to carry with him. He is personally committed to the continuance of marriage, even as he ministers to those whose marriages have failed. He is also keenly aware of the high regard that the writers of the Scriptures had for marriage,

though I suspect that his enthusiasm ought to be a little more nuanced. From a professional viewpoint, he has been deeply schooled in the sacramental, the committed, aspects of marriage. He needs to make place in his mind for a few more pieces of mental furniture, if the new ideas he must now entertain are to find in him a room and a place to rest. To achieve all this will not be easy.

In a way this is all new territory to him. The old mode of ministry to the divorced and separated was almost exclusively sacramental. New approaches, while not abandoning the old, are called for. In a sense, the priest is no different from the early Christians confronting the problems of the early Church.

Scripture has little of a concrete nature to say about ministry. By and large, the early Christians had to fend for themselves. "Apart from apostleship or the 'apostolate,' the Christian communities did not receive any kind of Christian order from the hands of Jesus while He lived on earth."(23) Ministry seems to have come about through the growing awareness of individuals who looked about them and saw certain needs that had to be met and certain goals that had to be achieved. So, for instance, Matthew's church was concerned for the "little ones" and feared abuses by those in office;

23. Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ (New York: Crossroads, 1981), p. 5.

the Ephesian community took stock of all its most obvious needs (Eph 4:11); and the post-apostolic church of the Didache showed a high concern for the orderly celebration of the Eucharist.(24) There was no ecclesiastical blueprint available to the early Church, to tell the early Christians what to do in every instance. It was really a live and learn situation. The Church, then as now, is called, prophet-like, to respond to the needs of the world wherever and whenever it finds itself. As Morton T.Kelsey says, "In our highly specialized civilization people have more and different problems...The Church, in providing pastoral care...is providing prophetic ministry for those with need."(25)

In my own case, and I am sure it is so in the case of so many other priests, ministry was largely understood in terms of sacramental ministration. The ministry of the counselor, which I shall take up in the next chapter, was a largely hit-and-miss operation. And the high degree of centralization in the Church at the parish level, left the priest with more duties than he could competently perform. Too often, different ministries were placed under the general heading of the sacraments and prayer. Priests now need to expand the notion of ministry to include more of the lay people. This movement, I believe, is the growing edge of today's Catholic Church.

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24. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-24.

25. Morton T. Kelsey, Prophetic Ministry (New York: Crossroads Publishing Co., 1982), p. IX.

## MINISTRY BY THE DIVORCED

Perhaps it is incorrect to speak of ministry to the divorced and separated. Such a formulation is somewhat unbalanced. What is needed, says Sr. Paula Ripple, is a "growing ministry not to the separated and divorced but by the separated and divorced."(26) Like members of AA, the separated and divorced share with each other a special understanding of what it means to suffer. As such, they are uniquely placed to minister to each other, because of the common experience. The first message is that the other is not alone in his or her pain. One can learn to begin to hope again. "Optimism," says Robert Leslie, "results from support that is felt from other fellow sufferers."(27)

In the early Church those who suffered were considered blessed in a special manner. In fact, the Church, as it has done down the ages, honored in a special way those whose virtues were called for at the time. In the periods of persecution, fidelity and perseverance were especially treasured virtues. Martyrdom, a word that comes from the Greek for witness, was the only category honored with sainthood in the early Church. "Suffering and withstanding torture for the sake of faith in Jesus the Lord had 'consecrated' him

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26. Paula Ripple, The Pain and the Possibility (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1978), p. 117.

27. Robert C. Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 113.

(the martyr saint) as an authentic witness."(28) It is my belief that today the real martyrs (the witnesses to the faith) are those whose suffering through divorce and separation make them especially significant within the whole process of Christian evangelization.

In this area especially, that of suffering, the Church at large needs to learn anew the lessons it received at its founding. It seems to me that the notion of suffering as salvific finds it hard going in the world today. Commercials tell us that there is a cure for whatever ails us, that there is a pill for headaches and another for anxiety. We have become, as someone said, a "pill culture." Even our young have picked up on this and seek relief, probably more than ever before, in escape through chemical dependence. We need in the Church to gain an insight into, and a renewed appreciation for, the value of suffering. It will not go away because we deny it or ignore it. In liturgical language we might say that the joy of Easter is not possible without the pain of Good Friday. The way up is often through the way down.

In their ministry, the divorced speak clearly of a God who still cares. It is so easy to believe when all goes well, but often difficult when one's world is in chaos. C. S. Lewis, when writing about the pain he experienced after the

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28. Schillebeeckx, Ministry, p. 33.

death of his wife, said, "Meanwhile, where is God?...to go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face" (29) The divorced keep the doors open to one another, when they respond in ministry to each other. The shortcoming of a sacramental ministry alone at this time is that it does not address the deep pain of loss then being experienced. A recognition of the human pain must also accompany the ministrations of the priest. To quote Lewis again, "Talk to me about the truth of religion...about the duty of religion... But don't come talking to me about the consolations of religion or I shall suspect that you don't understand."(30) It does not matter whether one has lost a spouse in death or through divorce; the loss is of a kind and the experience of it similar.

The divorced and separated are the great resource of today's Church, I believe. Like the early Church, we need to see the place and the value of those who suffer, especially our divorced and separated. From the point of view of the priest, the ideal has to be tempered by the experience of the real. I do not believe that we should jettison our high hopes for marriage. But I do believe that we can learn better to integrate a view of broken humanity than we have

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29. C. S. Lewis, A Grief Observed (New York: Seabury Press, 1961), p. 9.

30. Ibid., p.23.

done in the past, where the divorced and separated are concerned. After all, a great part of our history and self understanding is founded on the broken body of a man who finally triumphed. If victory is our goal, we must not forget how He got there.

The next chapter will deal with ways that could allow the Church to be more responsive to the hurt its members experience. I shall do this by making use of the ways it has modeled itself in its relation with its people, how it has seen itself vis a vis its members. For instance, it has often used, in its role as guide, the model of the teacher. One might question here how much it wishes to impart and how much it is willing to receive. If it has stressed very much its institutional structure, where authority is concentrated in the few, it is reasonable to enquire how such a model allows for reasonable dissent or input from below. In all, I shall make use of five models that the Church has used, or could use, and indicate the strengths and shortcomings of each in turn.

## CHAPTER THREE

## MODELS OF MINISTRY TO DIVORCED AND SEPARATED

The Church has often used models to explain both itself and its teachings.(1) Jesus had recourse to models to illustrate a point or bring home more clearly the import of what he was trying to say. All of us, for instance, are familiar with the image of the Church as the vine (Jn 15:1ff). Here Jesus uses the vine to drive home His point that His followers must maintain a close union with Him. Later on, Paul would use the figure of the human body for the same purpose (Eph 5:23, Col 1:8, 2:19). Such organic images were so powerful that they became stock-in-trade phrases for the community of believers.

In this chapter I will use the model as a way of bringing together some ideas on how ministry to divorced and separated can be developed in a parish.

In the Introduction I related largely my own growth, spiritually and intellectually, toward a point where I was able to consider even the notion of a ministry to the divorced and separated. I set down many of the preconceptions I had regarding marriage and church and how difficult it was for me to give due attention to the former without feeling I had

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1. Avery Dulles, S.J., Models of the Church (Garden City: Image Books, 1978). Much of what I have to say on the Church-as-Model will be based on this book.

done violence to the latter. I did not find the task an easy one. In the next chapter I attempted to give a brief history of the Church's position on marriage. There, too, I tried to point out the great investment the Church had in marriage and how much of its legislative efforts were directed toward the union of man and woman. The Church was, and still is, very concerned with the welfare of the family. But that very concern may have blinded it to the other aspects of marriage, especially in the area of marital breakdown. Life does not set out from a sheltered harbor and sail without threat of storm, or actual storm, toward its final goal. The joy and great hopes of the marriage ceremony must expect to encounter rough weather on the high seas of life. Half the journeys, the statisticians tell us, are never completed. This situation confronts the Church with deep problems today and is a great challenge to it. In a way, it is somewhat like the problems that faced the early Church, when it had to deal with reconciling its weak members who had found the threat of persecution too great and had left the fold.(2) Some Church leaders like Hermas (C.140 A.D.), had held the line on sinners and allowed them only one reconciliation with the Church, after Baptism.(3) Perhaps something like the

2. William A. Clebesch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs:Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp 13,42-49; John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper & Row, 1951); Bernard Poschmann, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick(New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), pp.35-62.

3. Shepherd of Hermas, "Commandments",in The Apostolic Fathers

solution proposed by Cyprian, who was Bishop of Carthage during the persecution of Decius (249-251 A.D.) could be applied to the situation today. When Cyprian found that close to half his flock had defected, because of fear of imprisonment or of fines, he realized that too strict an approach to the weaker members of the Church simply did not work out. At that time apostacy was among the sins for which there was no remission. He proposed instead a more lenient system to his friend, Cornelius (d. 258 A.D.), who had just become Pope. Cornelius saw the wisdom and the mercy in such a move and allowed apostates to return. "The statesmanlike stand of the great lawyer-bishop did much to stabilize the Church, and set a precedent for moderation in discipline," says J.T. McNeill.<sup>(4)</sup> The more lenient approach was the better solution.

Perhaps the larger Church will, one day, see its way to be more accepting of its weaker members, as was Cornelius. Perhaps those whose marriages are irreparably broken will be allowed to remarry within the Church. In the meantime, however, we must find better ways to minister to these people. One way to go about this I have found in an application of Avery Dulles' book, Models of the Church. At least it has given more ways to look at the same situation.

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(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953) p. 85, IV,3,6:  
"After that great and holy calling (i.e., Baptism), he (the Christian) has one repentance."

4. McNeill, p. 93.

## THE CHURCH ITSELF AS MODEL

Dulles lists five ways that the Church understands itself.

They are: [1] the Church as Institution.

[2] the Church as Community.

[3] the Church as Sacrament.

[4] the Church as Herald.

[5] the Church as Servant.

Each of these models has certain characteristics which I will list later on. First, however, I would like to say something about models themselves. Models are a way of visualizing things or ideas. In industry, for instance, a model of a proposed item can be made so that the people can see what the final product will look like. In physics a scientist can try to capture what a molecule looks like by constructing a model made from balls linked to each other in a definite pattern. So, too, the Church. In addition to the images of the Church as the vine or the body of Christ which I mentioned above, Scripture also uses such models of the Church as a flock, a field, a city, the pillar of truth, the Bride of Christ.(5)

All of these images are useful and serve in turn to bring out an important aspect of the Church. For instance, when the Church is compared to a flock, the image serves to impress upon us the need for everyone to follow the call of Jesus. It does not, of course, indicate "that the members of the

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5. Dulles, p. 23.

Church grow wool."(6)

Some models, too, are easier to visualize than others. A car manufacturer's model of a new automobile can look like a scaled-down version of the final product. Other models are not so easy to visualize, however. The image of the Vine is of such a kind. People are clearly not larger editions of a vine. What is intended by such an image is beyond ordinary sight. The important point here is that we grasp the inner dynamism of the Christian life, as it shares in the life of Christ, not its external dimensions.

All of this indicates that models are useful but imperfect. They do not fully illustrate what they stand for. The identification is never complete. We must usually go beyond what the particular model offers. Sometimes, too, we may have to use one model in conjunction with another, if we wish to bring out more fully the point we are trying to make. So, we might combine Christ's model of the Church as the vine and Paul's model of the Church as a body, if we wish to stress the need for a community to work prayerfully together. One instance of a multiple use of a model is to be found in the gospel of John where Jesus compares Himself successively to a "sheepgate," a "gate" and a "good shepherd" (Jn. 10:7-14). One cannot but note that such multiple use leads to some confusion. Economy of images would have resulted in a better

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6. Ibid., p. 27.

focus and greater clarity of expression.

#### THE CHURCH AS INSTITUTION

In his book, Dulles deals first with the Church as Institution. This model has been "a standard feature of Roman Catholic ecclesiology from the late Middle Ages until the middle of the present century."(7)

Probably its most evident feature is a concern for its hierarchical structures. Ministries will be clearly defined and there will be a clear line of demarcation between those who teach and those who are taught. A favorite comparison of the Church here is to a boat in which the faithful are brought safely home to heaven (Mt 8:23-27). The all-important thing is that they be obedient and that they stay within the ship. Any who leave run the risk of eternal damnation.

In this model, uniformity of belief and practice would be crucial. Deviation from the norm would be difficult to accept and those who "broke the rules" might quickly find themselves cut adrift and left to flounder in the threatening seas. The integrity of the ship and its passengers, to push the metaphor a little further, would be of paramount importance. The fate of the individual who jumped overboard

7. Ibid., p. 39.

had to be weighed against the greater factor of the entire ship's safety.

On the positive side, however, such a model offered a great deal of certainty. Rules and regulations were clear and extensive and compliance with them gave the person obeying them a definite assurance of God's favor. In the case of those who married, the phrase, "until death do us part," had a very precise meaning. Divorce would not be an option, unless in extreme cases, and remarriage would be almost unthinkable. In marriages that were crumbling, this could prove the cement which held them together. While staying together might be difficult, the knowledge that one was in compliance with God's will could be very comforting. Quite a few people I know look to the Church for stability in a world that has few clearcut guidelines.(8)

The institutional model on the other hand, finds it difficult to integrate divorced and separated people into its ranks. Since it demands a high degree of external uniformity, the dissolution of the marriage bond is a clear instance of

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8. Don S. Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976). Browning says that society lacks clear-cut directives at a time when people are being more and more uprooted from their cultural and spiritual roots: "Recent theory and practice of pastoral care has been without an ecclesiology." (pp. 17-37); Karl Menninger, M.D., Whatever Became of Sin (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1973). Menninger sees humankind as called to a corporate as well as a personal morality that admits of the existence of God. (pp. 13-132).

nonconformity. There can also be little input from below to tell of the trauma and the human tragedy of divorce. And a leadership that is celibate will find it very difficult to draft legislation that can almost only be born from the pain of a shared experience. For a more understanding response, we need to move to another model of the Church.

#### THE CHURCH AS COMMUNITY

In the Church-as-Institution model, we have seen that a great deal of stress is laid upon the structure, rules and a strict adherence to these rules. The visible society is pushed to the foreground. Individuals are less prominent.(9) The Community model allows a much greater role to its members.

Probably the best known biblical description of the Church in this sense is to be found in Paul's notion of the Church as the body of Christ.(Rom 12; 1Cor 12) This organic model stresses the inter-relatedness of the members and their dependence upon one another and upon Christ's life-giving presence. "Love one another," says Paul, "with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect. Do not grow slack but be fervent in spirit; he whom you serve is the Lord."(Rom 12:10-11) In this exhortation Paul points out that the Church is more than a grouping of people on the horizontal plane. The Church, to use another description

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9. Dulles, pp. 51-66).

often used in this context, is the people of God. Christ the Lord is the vivifying principle, the one who introduces the vertical dimension and makes of the membership a spiritual community of grace and mutual support. This comes close to the notion of the Greek ekklesia, a word which brings out clearly that the people, the demos, are called together. In this gathering the members should realize under Whose name they are called and should act as a people united in one faith (cf. 1Cor 11:18). In the Septuagint the same word makes more explicit the religious dimension of this gathering: "By your gift I will utter praise in the vast assembly." (Ps 22:26) The word "church" in English does not quite bring out this meaning. (10)

The Community model gives one a certain latitude not found in the Institutional model. The individual, both in his or her own uniqueness, is more easily recognized. There is also more place left for the person-in-community who is supported by, and gives support to, the other members. The means of grace are not so much channelled through the hierarchy as through all of the members who stand together in mutual faith and concern. A more loving community can arise from this concept of the Church.

At the same time, this model, too, suffers from its own

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10. Xavier Leon-Dufour, S.J.(ed), Dictionary of Biblical Theology (New York: Desclée, 1962), p. 58.

defects. It tends to give too great an emphasis to the divine element in an imperfect Church. We may well be the body of Christ, but ultimate perfection awaits the time of "the new Jerusalem" which is the goal of our Christian pilgrimage. (cf. Heb 12:22; Apoc 3:12)

For the divorced and separated, however, the idea of the Church as a community answers many of these desires for a place where they will be accepted and loved. Here, too, they can find support for their condition and much needed respect. In a more community based church they will receive the spirited help they need, a help that will be often channelled through the outreach of those who travel with them on the road to the heavenly Jerusalem. At the same time, their enthusiasms for such a community has to deal with a Church that is still imperfect. We are a Church which understands, in the words of Vatican II, "how great a distance lies between the message she offers and the human failings of those to whom the gospel is entrusted."(11) All in all, however, this latter model offers a personal dimension that is missing in the Institutional one.

#### THE CHURCH AS SACRAMENT

There is a certain tension between the two models of Church

11. Walter H. Abbott, S.J. (ed), The Church Today: Documents of Vatican II (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 245.

that I have just described.(12) The first model very clearly defines who belongs and why, while the latter can be rather vague on who does not belong and even why they should belong at all. One might say that the institutional person and the person in the more free-flowing Community model do not easily merge into a unified whole.

To bridge this gap, others have suggested that the model of the Church as Sacrament could make good certain defects present in the other two.(13) In brief, the matter could be described in this way.

Through Baptism a person is constituted a member of Christ's church. As I mentioned in the last chapter, the person at Baptism assumes a public identity in addition to the private dimension he or she has as an individual. All actions of that person, then, will bear this double mark. He or she will be at once a receiver and a doer, established in a special relationship to Christ and, in turn, His ambassador. In everyday language, the person as a member of the Church will be Christ's representative on earth. In the words of one theologian, "Essentially the Church (i.e., the people called through Baptism) is the historically continuing

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12. Dulles, pp. 67-79.

13. For a fuller exposition of Sacrament, cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., Christ, The Sacrament of the Encounter with God (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963); Karl Rahner, in Sacramentum Mundi , An Encyclopedia of Theology, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) ,V, pp. 378-386.

presence in the world of the incarnate Word of God."(14)

In such a view Christ is seen as coming not only "from above" (as He might in the Institutional model) but also "from below" (as He might in the Community model). He is made visible to the world in and through His people and in a special way through His sacraments.

The divorced and separated have, perhaps, a special role to play here. Because of the brokenness of their lives, they help us move away from a model that speaks to a perfection that can never be achieved this side of the Kingdom. The Church is not a perfect society and no community ever exemplifies all that it purports to be. The Church is as it always has been, a "Pilgrim Church," a Church on the way, a Church of the now and the not-yet. We can still have hopes, we can still dream that in the stumbling gait of this wounded believer we can glimpse the confident stride of the "Christ come to full measure."

#### THE CHURCH AS HERALD

Sacraments are signs. They point toward a reality not yet fully apprehended. They speak to the present and Christ's acting in the here and now, and intimately in the lives and

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14. Karl Rahner, The Church and the Sacraments, as quoted by Dulles, p. 73.

fortunes of His people, the Church. From the standpoint of the Church, the signs of His presence in it are never perfect, never complete. This is a limitation we must bear in mind for the divorced, lest we oversentimentalize their obvious, though restricted, "imaging forth" of Christ in the world.

This next model sees the preaching of the word of God as central to the Church. Unlike the last model, this one "makes the 'word' primary and the 'sacrament' secondary."(15) The Church is gathered together by the word (ekklesia: a community that has been called out) and formed in its proclamation. The image of herald has as its basic image the coming of the king to the town square to make known his will to the people. It is the Church's responsibility to preach God's word, "in season and out," no matter what the consequences. So long as the Church does this faithfully and consistently, it cannot be held responsible for the "Word's" non-acceptance. "The Church cannot hold itself responsible for the failure of men to accept it as God's Word; it has only to proclaim with integrity and insistence. All else is secondary."(16)

In such a view the focus is very much upon the now. Christ is

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15. Dulles, p. 81.

16. Richard McBrien, Church: The Continuing Quest, as quoted by Dulles, pp. 81-82.

present where He is proclaimed. In contrast, let us say, to the first two models, the historical dimension of the Church fades into the background. As one theologian has stated it, the Church is not a historical reality, it is an event: "The Church is really the Church only when it ...becomes an event. For the Church, identity with a sociological institution and a phenomenon of the world's history can be asserted only in terms of paradox."(17) The response of the person, in faith, makes the Church present; references to time and place are minimal or non-existent.

Such a model has the great advantage of giving us a dynamic view of the Church. In the face of the "word" we can no longer remain complacent. Neither can we "domesticate" God, for in the challenge of the word proclaimed no time is given us to "freeze" the moment or capture in sacrament the reality of Christ's living presence.

On the negative side, one might comment that such a view is rather highhanded. The word of God is proclaimed "from above" and, it seems to me, not enough thought or time is given to the condition of its hearers. From a pedagogical viewpoint the listener's state of intellectual or moral development is not sufficiently recognized. There seems to be lacking a certain willingness to enter into dialogue with

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17. Rudolph Bultman, Jesus Christ and Mythology, as quoted by Dulles, p. 85.

one's audience. As a Protestant minister once said, "There is here a 'take-it-or-leave-it attitude'." In a world which has grown increasingly skeptical of the spoken word, the presentation of God's word in this fashion could well encounter a great amount of opposition or misunderstanding. But from my viewpoint, not enough effort is given to seeking out how God is speaking through the lives and fortunes of His people. I see here, in short, a lack of incarnational theology, of Christ enfleshed in His people.

A great advantage of this model, nonetheless, for the divorced and separated, is its insistence, here and now, on God's saving presence. God still loves them, no matter what the nature of their situation. And this is a message that they need to hear. On the debit side, as I mentioned above, it does not pay sufficient attention to the incarnational aspects of God's presence. Left to itself, one might add, this model does not sufficiently address the possibility of the failure of preaching, nor of the concomitant call for action to bring about a better world. Social concern is weak here.

#### THE CHURCH AS SERVANT

The four models discussed so far, the Institutional, the Communal, the Sacramental and the Herald, "give primary or privileged position to the Church with respect to the

world."(18) In each case I have tried to indicate what actions the Church takes when it understands itself according to any one of the above paradigms. The Institutional will find itself hard put to make space for those who divorce, while the Communal model may tend to offer a sense of belonging to them without taking full account of the limitations of that homecoming welcome. The Sacramental will have to deal with the imperfect sign that a broken union presents, while the Herald model will find it difficult to enter into dialogue with the experience of those whose marriages fail. In this fifth, and last, model the Church, as it were, ceases to "talk down" to the world. Rather, it stands by the suffering world and sees in it, as Adam saw in Eve, something that is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."(Gen 2:23) In short, it sees reason for hope in the world because it enters in to help hope grow.

In its opening words, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World says,

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts ... That is why this community realizes that it is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history.(19)

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18. Dulles, p.95.

19. Abbott, pp. 199-200.

This document, called for short, The Church Today, was unique. It differed from other documents of Vatican II in that it was willing to ask questions outside the immediate concerns of the Church, or about the Church's own nature. The Council fathers had begun to realize that the Church "must speak also of the Church ad extra, of how it conceived its relation to the world today."(20) It came down unequivocally on the side of humanity, to be taken in its greatest extent and in the variety of its achievements. The Church was no longer to restrict its interest to any narrow confessional concerns. "The pivotal point of our presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience,mind and will."(21) The Church was henceforth to be not just a speaker but a listener, not just a master but a servant.

The people who will most benefit from this approach will not be just the Church's own members. It will be anyone the Church helps, and in this context that means any or all. And because it freely works with other churches and institutions, the area of its activity will be greatly increased. Today this is best seen, perhaps, in a willingness to challenge unjust social structures or to speak out with others on behalf of peace, or for those who are oppressed and have no voice of their own.

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20. Donald R. Campion, S.J., "Introduction", in *ibid.*, p. 184

21. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

The emergence of such a servant model is rather recent and, as Dulles tells us, it is difficult to find for it any cogent biblical warrants.(22) Nonetheless, I believe that this model does provide a valuable forum for the divorced and separated. Their sufferings have for too long gone unheeded or imperfectly understood. One can only hope that the approach of the Church toward suffering, which in the past was often callous and unfeeling, will now be more willing to listen with empathy to "the cry of the poor."

There is hope for progress, too, when we take a long-term view of the Church-as-learner. The Church has lasted for almost two millennia and it has had to learn a lot, often slowly and with great pain. These lessons resulted in shifts of opinion and of attitude that were often arrived at only after much soul-searching or painful losses, as was clearly brought out in Clebesch and Jaekle's book which I mentioned earlier. It is not easy to learn when one has been for so long a teacher.

In the document, The Church Today, Vatican II admitted that to carry out its work in the world it has "the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times ... of (recognizing) and (understanding) the world in which we live ... of (realizing that) the institutions, laws and modes of thinking and feeling as handed down from previous generations do not

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22. Dulles, pp. 106-107.

always seem so well adapted to the contemporary state of affairs... (and of) mutual exchange and assistance in concerns which are in some way common to the Church and the world."(23) The Church definitely sees itself in the midst of things. It has to be willing to learn and to make use of new advances in all the fields of learning. It admits that to apply old solutions to new problems pays scant attention to the admonition of Jesus that an old coat should not be patched with new cloth. (cf Lk 5:36-38)

For me, probably the most hopeful sign for the Church is the move toward incorporating the latest findings of behavioral scientists into its treatment of marriage and marriage breakdowns. When I was ordained, a marriage was considered unbreakable when a couple exchanged their vows and lived together, if only for the shortest period. This approach took little account of mental or emotional factors and depended too much upon a mere ecclesiastical understanding of love and commitment. The ideal blotted out the real and one element of the marriage agreement was allowed to outweigh all the others. The procedures for annulments, for all their clumsiness at this stage, show a new willingness to listen to other voices and to receive instructions from them. Even though the latest word from Rome seems to indicate a return to old procedures, I still think that, given the theological framework provided by Vatican II's The Church Today, advances will

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23. Abbott, pp. 201-239.

continue to be made.(24)

I have attempted to indicate how new understandings of the nature of the Church can free one to act differently. Dulles' use of models has been very useful for me. I realized from reading him that there were some aspects of the Church that I had not considered. Consequently, I acted as I thought that model indicated. In broad terms I would say that the Institutional model had dominated my thinking. It did give me a set of definite answers and did provide a needed continuity with the past and clarity where confusion often reigned. The Community model made me aware of the importance of the Social dimension of the Church. This prompted me to move for a greater recognition within the Church for those caught in divorce. Reflection on the Church as Sacrament gave me a new determination to minister to couples so that the sign that is their lives will not be "one of contradiction." The Church as Herald model gave me a new impetus to preach to all, divorced and otherwise, of the great love of God for everyone. Finally, the Servant model probably helped me most of all. The old answers "from above" no longer sounded so convincing. I had come down to listen and, of course, to learn.

24. Paula Ripple, The Pain and the Possibility (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1978), p. 59. The author quotes the directives of the diocese of Chicago which say that an annulment of a marriage "is a statement by the Church that the relationship fell short of at least one of the elements seen as essential for the binding union."

Which model is the best? I think that no one model is the final answer. All must be used as the situation indicates and the various needs demand. As a carpenter uses many tools to cut and shape to final form the furniture he is making, so too, I think, different models will better suit at one time, other models at another. But whatever tools are used, the end should be to ensure that the "many mansions" that Christ spoke of will be suitably furnished and amply filled. (Jn 14:2-3)

## CHAPTER FOUR

## HOW TO SET UP A GROUP

This chapter will deal with how we set up and maintained the group for divorced and separated. The group, as I mentioned earlier, was begun by Fr. Jose Lopez, from San Antonio, Texas, and myself, in May of 1980. From the summer of 1981 to the summer of 1982, Sister Grace Luther and I continued the work as parish representatives. Since the fall of this past year, I have taken over from Sr. Grace, who has returned to teaching.

The following account is not meant to be exhaustive. I shall try to give a fairly full account of our first faltering steps. After that, I hope to present some of the more significant events in which the group took part, with working agendas and partial bibliographies included.

Probably the most important factor in the calling together of the group was the fact that Fr. Lopez's sister had been divorced. This brought a sense of immediacy to our plans that would not have been possible otherwise. It helped us overcome some of the hesitations, both personal and theological, that I mentioned in the Introduction. The new ministry we had planned was now on more than a speculative ideal; we had a personal stake in it. Later this became even

more poignant for me when I learned of my own sister's marital difficulties.

The parish also had to be taken into account. We were aware of the reservations that many of the people would entertain. We were even more aware of the opposition that the other staff members might have. For that reason, we had two meetings with the staff in which we outlined our program, explained its needs and potential benefits, and asked for their input. We were pleasantly surprised at the reception we got, especially from the pastor, and felt encouraged to bring our plans to the parish at large. At the same time, we contacted some divorced people and asked for their response. Some replied in a puzzled fashion, wondering what good such a group could accomplish, while others were quite enthusiastic. In the main, however, the response was favorable.

We also discussed the place of the meeting. Some had suggested private homes. However, parking considerations and the difficulties some members might have in finding correct addresses made us choose a parish venue. Besides, we thought that a meeting on parish property would help to bring attention to the group and help to win acceptance for our work. We had both read Don Browning's book and were persuaded that the parish-based meeting place had many things to recommend it.(1) It proved a wise choice.

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1. Don S. Browning, The Moral Context of Pastoral Care

Our next task was to find a suitable room and time. We had to compete for space with other parish organizations, so our choices were limited. We finally decided upon the school library. This provided plenty of space, and coffee or tea was available for those who wished. The one big drawback was the presence of two large tables. We solved the problem, in part, by stacking one on top of the other; but the formal nature of the room never lent itself to a warm, friendly atmosphere. In retrospect, I would say that the poor quality of the meeting place was one of our major drawbacks. It was never solved until we moved to a room with a much less "institutional" look, with a large sofa, some arm chairs, and smaller chairs that could be moved around. This flexibility of arrangement was a great advantage. As regards the night of the meeting, we decided on either Tuesday or Thursday nights, to avoid Monday Night Football (not of interest to me but possibly to others) and my day off on Wednesday. Friday night, the end of the week, was not even considered because of a poor track record for parish turnouts in the past. The length of the meetings followed that of most regular meetings, (7:30-9:30 p.m.).

The last part of the preparation was to announce the forma-

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(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976). Also good is Robert Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1971); for the importance of "acceptance and affirmation" in the healing of pain and rejection, see also Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp.155-190.

tion of the group to the parish. We already had a ready audience in the people who attended Mass each Sunday. A special sermon at each of the Masses would reach a great number of people, indicate a much-desired official approval of our plans, and calm any fears that people might have about such a new development. To make the idea more attractive, Fr. Jose agreed to speak at each Mass and use his own sister's marital situation to give his talks a more personal dimension. We were very happy with the enthusiastic reaction of the people. We were on our way!

I shall now list in succession the steps that we took before we formed the group.

#### FORMAT FOR SETTING UP GROUP

##### Remote Preparation

1. Check one's own attitude towards divorce. Read up on subject widely. Find out about local and diocesan groups.
2. Discuss proposal in detail (need of group, size, meeting place, format of meeting, survey results, if any) with parish staff. Goal here should be to distribute information and gain approval for plan.

3. Assess needs through informal survey, by talking to divorced and separated members of parish. Ask for suggestions on times, length of meetings, etc.

Proximate Preparation

1. Set a Sunday for presentation to parish members. If at all possible, have one person give all the talks. This gives unity of purpose. Everyone in the pews will hear the same message.

2. Place announcements in parish bulletin at least two weeks ahead of Sunday's presentation. Indicate purpose of the group, time and place of meeting, who are welcome to join.

3. Arrange for meeting place that is friendly and inviting. Reserve this for successive weeks, so that continuity of meetings will be assured.

4. Form a welcoming committee of at least two divorced people. There should be, if possible, an equal representation of men and women on the hospitality group. Plan to have committee members make presentations and, later on, to lead small group discussions.

5. Have cards/name tags available for visitors to fill

out name, addresses and phone numbers, number of children (if any), and ages of children.

Actual Meeting

1. Greet people warmly. Many are often very shy and reserved and need encouragement. Start meeting with a reading from Scripture.
2. Introduce team. Give a brief presentation on goals of group, length and frequency of meetings, and list a few hopes and expectations. Stress the theological rationale of group.
3. Have team members give a brief history of their lives. This will help others feel at home and, later on, be able to talk about their own situation.
4. Divide people into smaller groups (no more than six), under leadership of a welcoming committee member, to get a sampling of needs and aspirations. Have each person in group introduce self and, if possible, give information on such non-threatening matters as how long they have been in area, ages of children (if any), how long divorced, occupation. Avoid any in-depth or overly long report at this time.

5. Get each person to list three topics that he/she would like discussed. Have group leader write all these down on large sheet of paper. Ask each person to vote for three items that are of most interest. Choose the two that (or larger number, if total number present is ten or less) get the most votes.

6. If possible, put the three choices from all the groups on large sheets of paper attached to walls. This will help people visualize the results. A chalkboard will do just as well for this. Ask each person to vote for two items (or more, if so desired). Tally scores and choose the six highest scores. Then set agenda for the following six weeks. Retain lists from groups for future reference.

7. Stress that a commitment to come for a specific period of time (no less than four weeks, anyway) is vital for any real progress with group.

8. Finish at stated time so that a precise pattern of expectations is established early. Keep meeting on the light side.

#### OWNERSHIP OF GROUP

Probably the most difficult thing to achieve is the owner-

ship of the group. One urge that a priest has to fight is the tendency to assume leadership of the group. The model that he is most familiar with is normally the Institutional one, which I dealt with in the last chapter. This model tends to have all, or at least most, of the decisions come from above. Very quickly this results in the leader's becoming more and more responsible for setting the agenda, running the meeting and generally being burdened with many extra duties. Burnout symptoms very quickly begin to show.(2) The group can very quickly die from his tiredness.

With the institutional type of leadership, too, there is a much less well-develpoed sense of "owning" the group. Members will quickly "pass the buck" where responsibilities are concerned, on the vague plea that someone else will take over or "pick up the slack." Deadlines will not be met and, except for the flow of orders from above, little initiative will be taken by those lower down the ladder of command. The group can still continue to meet, even though the initial drive and purpose quickly fade and members' interest will tend to wander elsewhere.

This, in fact, happened early on in our group. The results were quickly seen in diminishing attendance and a general malaise. The purpose of the group was lost sight of too

2. Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, The Priest and Stress (Washington: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1982).

often and members wandered in and out at will. It often came down to a matter of personalities; whether one liked another person or not determined attendance or non-attendance.

To set this aright, we began to change our understanding of the members' strengths and weaknesses. Our initial approach was to regard divorced and separated as people in need of help. While this is true, an overall approach that stresses this too much, tends to ignore the hidden potential of the persons involved.(3) We began to examine the model provided by AA, where help is not necessarily given by the strong, but where weak reaches out to weak to give a helping hand. We found that this dovetailed very well with the notion of Christian ministry. While we might not be able, as did St. Paul, to "be content in our weakness" (2 Cor 12:10), nonetheless, we did begin to find common cause in our shared hurt. We began to challenge people to minister to one another, to go outside their own pain to support someone else in need. We did this by often introducing the notion of actively seeking out someone else to talk to in the group or to meet afterward, or even to phone later on in the week. We also took time for reflection upon models of ministry from Scripture and how, in a concrete way, the "suffering servant" can also save (e.g., Isaiah 42-53; the many passages on "servant" as applied to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and in

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3. James J. Young, CSP,(ed.), Ministering to the Divorced Catholic (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p.7; Paula Ripple, The Pain and the Possibility (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1978), p.117.

Romans 15; there are many other passages that can be found in any Bible concordance). This approach helped us move from the model of the Church as Institution to that of the Church as Community and Servant. A theological and scriptural understanding did help us plan new approaches.

Another thing we did was limit the meetings to six week sessions. We had found that an open-ended time approach left the members disoriented. They could commit themselves to a small number of meetings, but not an indefinite period of time. After some trial and error, we agreed on meetings over six week segments. This seemed to give a certain feeling of continuity to our group and did not tax our time for review and we could plan to continue what had worked well, or discontinue what had not proved successful.

The notion of a frequent review had many beneficial results. In addition to the ones just mentioned, we were wble to bring the members more closely into owning the group. Several times the experience of the previous session gave individuals ideas on what he or she could offer in the up-coming series. We got some of our best session results from those members who individually undertook to lead the group on a given topic. Ownership improved when they saw their efforts validated by the group's participation and enthusiastic response.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF MINISTRY

The members, who now call themselves the Phoenix Group, meet on either Tuesday or Thursday evenings. For every night there is an assigned topic. Some of these topics can be seen on the newsletter we send out regularly, ( Appendix, pp. 101-103).

It would be rather impractical to give an account of all of the meeting topics. For that reason I am dividing the subjects covered into three categories, the personal, the social, and the spiritual. That will cover rather well the spectrum of our concerns. First, I shall deal with the personal dimension.

### The Personal Dimension

One of the overwhelming feelings of the divorced person is a sense of loss. This feeling may be so intense that the person cannot believe that anyone else could understand. Emotions are raw and the stress level tends to make the person withdraw from contact with others. It is most important, as the AA approach confirms, that the person be brought together with others, so that the feeling of aloneness does not destroy him or her. Isolation, which results in reduced input from outside and leads easily to disorientation, despair and, all too often, a growing chemical dependency, has to be counteracted by a caring group that reassures the

suffering person that he or she is not alone. This is the first and most important step. That was my reason for stating, earlier in the chapter, that a spirit of care and concern be instilled from the very beginning. But the person must also be helped to understand his or her grief at more than a feeling level. Intellectual input becomes important here. We need to know what is going on in our lives and why.

To meet this need, we have used the "Social Adjustment Rating Scale" (Appendix, p. 104) on a number of occasions. The purpose of this was to open up discussion on the stress factors in a person's life, and thus to help the people to an understanding of why they felt, or feel, a particular way. This rating process also serves to make the members' experience of pain or loss more objective and, consequently, capable of being shared by others. The discussions that followed the filling out of the questionnaire were often quite animated. I suspect that some of the people felt a little less "unusual" after airing their opinions. Their feelings were, after all, quite normal, and to be expected. Another good feature of these discussions was the learning of coping skills from each other, during the ensuing exchanges.

It is important for the group not to lose sight of the personal and changing needs of its members. To counteract the tendency to become complacent, we have often handed out surveys for the purpose of updating our information files

(Appendix, p.105). Such questionnaires have helped us plan topics for discussion, arrange family and group meetings, and provided us with a good "feeling" for the needs of the members. Another survey we found useful was the Evaluation and Suggestion Sheet, (Appendix, p.106). Other examples of what we have done to keep the group open and caring are to be found in the Phoenix Group Meeting, (Appendix, p.107)and in the Leaders' Effectiveness Checklist, ( Appendix,p. 108). A somewhat humorous, but appreciated "Ten Commandments for the Divorced" was also handed out to the members, ( Appendix, p. 109). All of the above are examples of efforts we have made, and continue to make, to keep our group current and concerned with the needs of the members.

### Social

Within a short time following the foundation of the group, we realized that discussions invariably centered on the "scars" of ancient hurts. We soon found out what the AA call "Drunkalogs". Members soon became very uneasy about this development. The habit of going back over past battles continued week after week, with no sign of change. Some members began to voice their objections, while others showed their disapproval by voting with their feet. We then drew up a list of do's and don'ts, even though we worried about restricting freedom too much through the imposition of too many rules. The following is a list of ground rules for

discussion that we drew up.(4)

1. The focus of this group is on feelings, not on ideas or facts. How you feel is important and feelings are neither right nor wrong.
2. Please accept each other's expression of feelings. We prefer that you do not correct anyone, but listen with attention and concern.
3. Keep to the present. Avoid the past, in case you become trapped there. You live right now, not last week or a year ago.
4. Keep a secret. Whatever is said here is to remain here. Confidentiality is sacred.

Once we had established these simple ground rules, our group functioned more easily. Some reverted at times to the past, or began discussing ideas rather than feelings. However, we were able to bring them back "on track" by invoking the simple guidelines we had agreed upon.

As time went by, we began to see a need for more than mere discussion. We mulled over the desirability of having a

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4. Leslie, pp. 138-161. Most of what follows is taken from here and also from Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Growth Groups (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 36-56.

cultural chairperson arrange for attendance at plays and concerts. This idea was taken up by the group enthusiastically, but different tastes and steep admission costs made it next to impossible to pursue this course with any great success. The most successful replacement so far has been the planning of pot-luck dinners in members' homes. These are held on an average of every four to six weeks, generally in conjunction with a home Mass. This approach helps to keep the group home-based and parish oriented.

Our most successful meeting format has been to allow individual members to lead the various sessions. The usual approach, as I mentioned earlier, is to arrange topics for a six week period. We then ask for volunteers to lead any one of the ensuing discussions. For instance, we devoted an evening to the discussion of welfare legislation and child custody laws. One of our frequent visitors works for the State of California Dept. of Welfare. She led the discussion that evening and answered many of the questions that were of obvious concern to quite a few of the participants. I am convinced that the utilization of resources within the group gives the members a sense of confidence and self-worth, as well as the much needed morale boost that the recognition of one's competence brings. I would add in a word of caution here. We have found that some of the contributors get "cold feet" and do not follow through. This has lead to a quick rescheduling of events and occasionally we have not been able

to find a replacement. It is a good idea to have a back-up person or tape available for such emergencies.

Through all of this, we have become increasingly aware of the great value of education. People need a minimum of education, a storehouse of vital information that is necessary for survival. When a person goes through the trauma of a marriage breakup, this knowledge may not be available. The emotional needs of the moment, the sometimes overwhelming feelings that well up at this time, can make a person almost incapable of surviving. Inherited or recently acquired knowledge can help a person past this stage. As Mel Krantzler remarked, "Once I had recognized the pull of the past in operation, my professional training came into play... Today is not yesterday. Today is today... Intellectual understanding of emotional reality does not produce instant results. But it is the way to begin." (5)

Books such as Krantsler's became a rich source for discussion. We would frequently ask the group what books they had read recently and if they would be willing to share what insights they had gained from them. We were, of course, selective and accepted only those book summaries that dealt with topics which were of interest to most of the people.

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5. Mel Krantsler, Creative Divorce: A New Opportunity for Personal Growth (New York: Evans, 1973) p.24; see also Howard J.Clinebell,Jr.,Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 189-204.

This procedure worked somewhat like a book report in a seminar. We had many lively discussions following what was often a brief (purposely so) introduction to the topic dealt with in the book. Among the many books reviewed and discussed were, How to Survive the Loss of a Love, When Bad Things Happen to Good People, Love is Letting Go of Fear, Living Alone and Liking It, Getting Well Again (6).

It was a desperate resort, when worthwhile sharing dwindled to a trickle, that we hit upon the idea of these book presentations. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Besides giving us that many more items to discuss, it also got the members interested in reading and more willing to contribute to the life of the group.

### Spiritual

We function at many levels and our needs are diverse. This fact of human life became apparent early on in the group's life. We searched around for ways to meet these needs, and the results of our findings are, in part, recounted in the above paragraphs, where I dealt with the personal and social dimensions of our ministry. I would like now to go on to deal with the way we integrated the spiritual along with the other two aspects.

6. Cf. Bibliography for further details on these and other books; also the Appendix for brief summaries of individual books, (p.118-127).

While it is vital to feed the individual and social needs of the person, it is also very necessary to meet his or her religious longings. To be fully human, we need all three of these dimensions present. To leave out any one of them is to minister to a truncated person. The religious aspect helps the person see himself or herself in a more global perspective. We need to situate ourselves in a context larger than the needs of this moment or place will indicate. We need, as the saying goes, "to pull things together."

We have an active spiritual ministry , as I indicated above, in our frequent home Masses and our beginning and ending our meetings with prayer. We also have days away in the mountains, or down by the ocean, on the average of three per year. These excursions are in the nature of retreats, a word that has definite associations for Catholics. The purpose of the day is to give a person an opportunity to give undivided attention to prayer and reflection. We generally arrange to have these days away sometime in the fall, during Lent and at the beginning of summer. An important concern for us at these times is to allow the members to relax, to "wind down" from their normally hectic schedules and to enjoy a time and a place of quiet and relaxation. In all of this we try to keep the focus on prayer, though not in such a way that is disconnected from life. God does speak in and through the myriad goings on of our daily lives. But we must also find time, as did Jesus, to "go up onto a mountain to pray", along

with some close friends.(Lk 9:28) It is at times such as these, where worries are shared and the presence or absence of God is discussed, that we so often come to know the Lord (and each other better, I should add) "in the breaking of bread."(Lk 24: 13-35)

Once in each six-week session, we have an evening devoted to a topic that is more focused on our spiritual lives. This can take the form of a time searching the Scriptures, by looking at our call to minister in the light of the Gospel and in the context of our daily lives (Appendix, p. 110-111), or just simply spending an hour or so quietly praying. (Appendix,p. 116)

It is important, too, that the members understand their role as ministers to each other, in the context of their baptismal calling. They need to relate what they do to their lives as followers of Jesus. In other words, how does what they do, with and for each other, fit into their religious life?. And since their religious life is lived out in the "real", the secular, world, they also need to incorporate their worldly experiences into their spiritual concerns. I have found that Henri Nouwen's book, The Wounded Healer, (7) deals well with the situation of the person-as-minister in today's world . I have included a handout we gave to our members, when we

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(7) Henri J.M. Nouwen: The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society (New York: Image Books, 1979)

discussed this book together. (Appendix, pp. 112-115) The concern the members show to each other indicates that they accept well the need to be ministers to one another.

This listing of activities and ways of sharing is not, as I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, all-inclusive. But it will give some idea of the scope of our efforts and the extent of our successes and failures. We are still learning and we still need to continue to search out new ways of doing old things. We have had our "ups and down", and we have had to fight the tendency to give up, especially when valued friends moved away. At such times we have had to remind ourselves that we are here to be of service and not to keep people in bondage to our desires. It is useful to keep reminding oneself, too, in a ministry such as this, that success comes when the person no longer needs us.

The upcoming chapter, the Conclusion, will attempt to draw together some of the lessons I have learned since I took on this ministry. The road of learning and doing has been for me a very worthwhile one and one that I am glad I have taken. There is still a lot to be learned, a great deal to be changed, and who knows what the next turn on the road will bring!

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSION

## THE FREEDOM OF THE SPIRIT

"It was the best of times," wrote Charles Dickens, "it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us."(1)

In many ways the situation of the divorced and separated has much in common with Dickens' opening words of his story of the French Revolution and of the people caught up in the ferment of the times. A marriage dissolution is often a violent break with the past, a sundering of the ties of friendship and emotionally wrecking experience. The "best", to quote Dickens, is the "worst", what was once "wisdom" has now become "foolish". People whose lives were once inextricably bound together, whose very thoughts and dreams found an echo in the hearts and minds of the other, now find themselves adrift and alone without the familiar landfall of a common home. Whither the journey now? Is there reason for hope? Can anything be done by and with the divorced and

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1. Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1931), p.1.

separated? From my experience I think there can.

I believe that the great developments in the area of pastoral care and counseling provide the Church with wonderful opportunities for a reaching out to people caught in the pain of divorce and separation. It is my opinion that the new insights from these fields give the Church new and better ways of looking at old problems.

We are now in a much better position to understand the dynamics of grief, for instance, and how the divorced can be helped to resolve their deep sense of aloneness and failure. Work by people such as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross on the problems of death and dying have proved of great value in coming to better understanding of how to respond to people suffering from deep, personal loss.(2) Studies such as her's have helped me see the private dimension of grief and not just the communal effects of divorce. The Church can benefit greatly by incorporating these findings into its response to the breakdown of marriage. In the past its focus has been, I believe, too narrow. The demands of canon law do not exhaust the import of divorce. The departure of a spouse is also a deeply felt, personal tragedy. Any response that limits itself to a concern for ecclesial order only runs the risk of making the pain of separation that much more exquisite.

2. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York:Macmillan , 1969)

Society, too, has changed. People are more mobile and the old neighborhood ties and parish association are not as strong as they once were. Studies into the whole area of group interaction and the formation of basic communities have been of great help to me. In these instances, as I indicated above, the works of Robert C. Leslie, Don S. Browning and Howard Clinebell have proved of great value. I believe that the Church-at-large can also learn a great deal from these men's efforts. People today seem to be less satisfied with large meetings. Small and more intimate groups meet a growing need for sharing at a more personal level. I believe that the Church has a wonderful opportunity of exploiting the values of groups such as these men describe. The Church's large-style gatherings, such as for Mass, can be enhanced greatly by the recognition of the personal growth that best occurs within small group meetings.

New theological and scriptural studies, too, have thrown light on both the nature and origins of the Church. Such studies help to ground the advances made in recent years in the social sciences and fit them into an ecclesial structure. In particular, I have found helpful the works of Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Henri Nouwen and Avery Dulles. From these men I have learned that the Church is much more fluid than I had once thought, and that dissent from some of the inherited teachings is not of itself an act of betrayal but a necessary condition for genuine growth.

All of these factors give me reason for optimism. I have tried to see how the new insights fit into a parish situation and have been gratified at the results. This paper is only a beginning of what I hope will be a fruitful apostolate.

I have tried in this report to give an outline of the actual formation and functioning of a ministry to the divorced and separated in this parish. From our first faltering steps we have grown to a community of about one hundred, with a weekly meeting that regularly attracts twelve to fifteen people. As well as that we have four annual workshops that feature well known speakers and bi-monthly days of recollection. Each month we meet for a potluck dinner at one of the member's houses which is usually preceded by a Mass. The fact that the group has been in existence for almost three years suggests that some needs at least are being met. Still, much remains to be done and a great deal has yet to be learned.

I have presented this report from three perspectives, the personal, the theological-scriptural and the ecclesial. These three vantage points have served to give focus to my thoughts on the fourth chapter on how to set up a group. In practice, of course, we did not set up a theoretical model and then act. We learned from doing and not just from theory alone. But most of all, we learned from our mistakes. That is the hardest way, even if it is sometimes the best.

I have learned a great deal from my own personal odyssey. That, I think, is made clear in the Introduction. There was no way, really, that I could have known otherwise than having some of my inherited prejudices overthrown. The past had moulded me more than I knew. I was and am like Ulysses in Tennyson's poem by that name, "a part of all that I have met." And, like Ulysses too, my journey is still far from over. No harbor is gained without some effort and, once arrived at, there is always the temptation to stay, to set down roots. I must continue the journey, most of all the journey within.

The Church, too, has got its past and its own ways of acting and of understanding itself. It has, shall we say, its own interests, its way of seeing things. That is what I wished to elaborate upon in the chapter on the Divorced and the Church. The Church's own self-understanding, its particular theology, have shaped its history and the lives of its members. Without some knowledge of that history, we might well wonder what the meaning of today is, and why a specific ministry to the divorced and separated is such a newcomer to the ecclesiastical scene. Part of the picture, too, was the scriptural contribution. The marriage of the Semitic and Greco-Roman worlds with that of the Holy Roman Empire was not always a peaceful one. Practice and theory often made for strange bedfellows. When we add to that the world views and values of the different cultures and subcultures that the

Church encompassed, it is not to be wondered at too much that the Church sought refuge in the ideal in a very imperfect world. Marriage was, and still is, looked at very much from the viewpoint of the Kingdom of God, a world, rather a rule, already in our midst but still awaiting its final form. Again, the tension between the ideal preached and the everyday reality still remains to be eased, if indeed it every will be. I am still completely committed to the ideal of permanence in marriage relationships, but I believe that allowance should be made for those whose unions falters. We need, I believe, to allow for failure. As a well known scholar has written, "The Kingdom of God is not directly identical with its proclamation."(3)

The Church at this very moment is still struggling with the issue of marriage and divorce. The latest news from Rome indicates that the demand on married people is still one of lifelong commitment. Canon 1095 of the soon to be promulgated Code of Canon (Church) Law states that, "A ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any case other than death."(4) It would seem that such a statement leaves one with little room to maneuver in case of a failure. But I do not think we should

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3. John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 481; for a rather extensive treatment of the Kingdom of God in Scripture, see Norman Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1963).

4. Cf. Appendix (p. 117).

be dismayed.

The purpose of the chapter on models of ministry was to provide some framework for a different response by the Church to those who have been divorced. It is my belief that a new way of exercising authority could help us devise new and better ways of responding to our members whose marriages have broken down. The application of the Institutional model in the main has left us somewhat inflexible in our approach. That model, as I indicated, has some definite strengths, as well as some obvious weaknesses. But the Church is a survivor and it has ministered in different ways throughout its long history, as Clebsch and Jaekle have shown, without losing its soul.(5) Patience is probably our most urgent need here. "It is not without reason," as someone once said, "that Rome is called the 'Eternal City'!" I wish at times that it would hurry up. After all, as I mentioned earlier, it learned from the experience of the people not to expect perfection in times of persecution, and it changed its whole approach to the reconciliation of sinners as a result. It is not too much to hope that it can learn today from the experience of those whose marriages fail.

5. William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964) pp. 33-66. The four pastoral functions of healing the sick, sustaining for the timid, guidance for those who seek, and reconciling for the sinner, seem to me to be especially useful in any discussion of the Church's ministry to the divorced and separated.

But the Institutional model does not accept lessons from below too easily. And it is from below, from the living experience of people caught in impossible situations, that a theology of liberation is now being formulated mainly in the Third World. The model of Church as Servant could well give us a way out of a steadily mounting problem. In the meantime, we have many opportunities to continue at the parish level what Jesus said He came to preach, "liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind... release to prisoners, (and) to announce a year of favor from the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19; cf. Is 61:1 ff). This revelation of His mission came about, Jesus told us, quoting Isaiah, because "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me."

It was this same "Spirit" that moved Pope John XXIII to call together an ecumenical council that January day, 1959. The windows of the Church which he opened at that time allowed more air to flow through than any of us could have anticipated. As St. John reminds us, "The wind (or Spirit) blows where it will" (Jn 3:8). God has a way of turning our well arranged plans upside down. The Spirit is free where we are often hidebound, adventuresome where we are mostly frightened. At the parish level we can be less circumspect and offer our divorced brothers and sisters a love and acceptance that we can but hope the official Church will soon follow. It has often been thus. If we cannot create a world where divorce and separation are no more, at least we can

help create one where "the poor have the good news preached to them" (cf. Mt 11:2-5, Lk 7:18-22).

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**APPENDIX**



# PHOENIX

for separated, divorced, widowed, and never married

No 2

September 1982

## Calendar

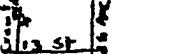
SEPT. 18 HOME MASS and POT LUCK  
 SEPT. 21 GENERAL MEETING, NEW CONFERENCE RM.  
 SEPT. 25-26 VALYERMO FALL FESTIVAL  
 OCT. 9 DAY AWAY RETREAT  
 OCT. 9-10 IRISH FAIR, NORTHRIDGE  
 OCT. 15 HOME MASS and POT LUCK  
 OCT. 23-24 SOPHIA RETREAT  
 NOV. 5 WORKSHOP : DR. JEROME PEPPERMAN, CLA

**SOCIAL:** JOANNA MICHIE 592-3891(w)  
 982-7662(h)

The September Home Mass and pot luck is for the family. Janell Wisda will host. Fr. O'Reilly will celebrate Mass at 6:00p.m. ADDRESS: 1336 CRAWFORD AVE., UPLAND. PHONE: 985-0740.

A-L Salad or dessert

M-Z Main dish or beverage

 (east side, by the three palm trees )

Foothill ↑ Birds

Mary Ann Mc County will host in October. Children invited. Details will be in next newsletter.

Patti Meehan is teaching square dancing Mon. evenings in the auditorium at O.L.A. beginning Sept. 20 from 7:30 to 9:30p.m. Singles or couples welcome. \$2.00 per session.

SR.GRACE LUTHER IS NOW AT HOME IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS at 251 W. Ligustrum DR. ZIP 78228

**SPiritual:**  JACQUELINE MEAD  
 980-0808

A one day silent retreat will be held at Our Lady of the Lakes Church Fatima Shrine in Crestpark at Lake Arrowhead on Saturday, October 9. Fr. O'Reilly will conduct the retreat. Mass will be at 8p.m. This is a time for meditation, prayer, and reflection. Bring a journal if you wish to participate in guided imagery. Bring a sack lunch. A small kitchen is available for coffee or tea. Call Jacqueline if you plan to attend so that we can make adequate arrangements.

MEET AT O.L.A. PARKING LOT FOR CARPOOLING AT 8:15-8:30 A.M. Plan to have dinner at a local restaurant when we return.

DIRECTIONS: SAN B. FRWY #10 EAST TO MT. RESORTS EXIT TO HWY 18. Hwy 18 will take you to the mountains. TURN LEFT IN CRESTPARK. CHURCH IS ABOUT 1/4 MILE ,ON THE LEFT.

**EDUCATIONAL/CULTURAL:** DIANE MURDOCK  
 982-2043

VALYERMO FALL FESTIVAL AT SAINT ANDREWS PRIORY will be held Sept. 25 and 26. This is an all day event. It includes art exhibits, good food, liturgical dance, books, new and used, and a wide variety of booths in an atmosphere of joy and love. Since people may wish to go at varying times please call Diane to let her know if you are going, if you are willing to drive, or if you wish to carpool with someone. We'll try to match you for day and time.



# PHOENIX

*A single living group  
for separated, divorced, and widowed*

## Editor's Note

Sincere apologies to those who thought they may have been left off the mailing list. Numerous delays forced us to cancel the last newsletter. At this printing we have dropped 40 names of persons we have not seen or heard from in more than six months. Please call Mary Lou at 626-6584 if you or someone you know wishes to be included on this years circulation.

## Discussions

Weekly discussion groups have resumed in Msgr. Barry's office from 7:30p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Topics are as follows:

- Jan. 11 Risk Taking  
presented by Mary Lopez
- Jan. 18 Spiritual Growth  
presented by Fr. Peter O'Reilly
- Jan. 25 Broken Relationships  
presented by Agnes McGlone
- Feb. 1 Guided Imagery  
facilitated by Jacqueline Heade
- Feb. 8 Single Parenting  
presented by Sydell Stokes

## !! Flash !!

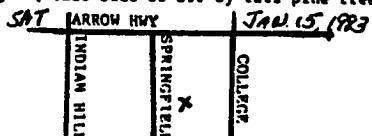
Don Bourque has agreed to be our new Telephone Chairman. He'll be calling to remind you of important events such as.....

## Day Away

A day of prayer and reflection has been scheduled for Feb. 5 at our Lady of the Assumption Church in the Conference Room. Fr. Peter O'Reilly will lead us through a variety of exercises designed to prepare us spiritually for the season of Lent soon upon us. Bring your Bible and a journal if you keep one. the day will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end with Mass at 4:00 p.m. Bring a sack lunch. Beverages will be provided.

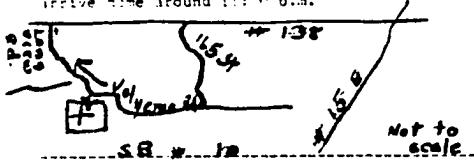
## Home Mass

Our January home Mass will be hosted by Mary Lou Cucuzza at 414 Springfield St. in Claremont. Children are welcome. A-L bring a salad or a dessert. M-Z bring a main dish or a beverage. ( east side of St. by tall pine tree)



## (VALVERMO - continued)

This year at the Valvermo Bowl, actress Mary Betterton will present her one-woman play "Mary M." the story of Mary Magdalene, of which she is the author. This play starts at dusk, you'd arrive home around 11:00 p.m.



WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 6, 1982

Dr. Jerome Tepperman, clinical psychologist, with a practice in Los Angeles and a consultant in stress will present a workshop on reducing stress in our lives, assertiveness, and inner self-confidence in the auditorium at D.L.A. Watch for further details.

TELEPHONE: CORRINE BART 980-0808

An information form will be given out at each meeting or activity between now and Nov. 6. Please fill one out so that you will continue to receive the newsletter.

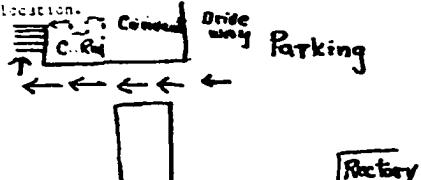
TREASURER: CAROL JAKWERTH 621-3645

\$\$\$\$\$\$ The Phoenix group needs to develop a source of income. The board does not want anyone to feel that they cannot attend inactivity because of limited income. Therefore we will not collect dues. However we will accept tax deductible donations in order to defray our expenses. Please contribute if you wish but feel free to pass if it is inconvenient.

COMMUNICATIONS: EILEEN WOOD 624-7493

An information flyer is being developed to pass out to interested persons in other parishes.  
The board has decided to distribute the newsletter on a monthly basis. The Tuesday evening discussion group topics will not be available at press time. Please call the rectory for information (624-3596) or look for announcements in the church bulletins.

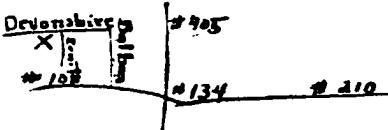
A question has been raised about the Tuesday discussions. Are they meeting your needs? Please give the question some thought and contribute your ideas at the general meeting on Sept. 21, 7:30 in the new conference room. As some of you already know the old conference room has been made into a classroom. The new conference room is in the convent. See diagram below for its location.



The hot line has been cabled for the time being. The board wishes to gather more information on how to provide training and staffing.

## Announcements

The Grand National Irish Fair will be held Sat. and Sun. Oct. 9 and 10. It is a family fun day with continuous entertainment, sports, bagpipes, drums, Gaelic language competitions, and ancient and medieval parades, flags and banners.



The Sophia Fellowship is a counseling group in Garden Grove. They sponsor number of retreats. Their Oct. retreat will deal with divorce and broken relationships. Agnes McGlone is going. If you'd like to know more call Agnes at 599-3556.

The Mission Inn ,Riverside has a dinner theater show for about \$ 20.00. They are performing "Fiddler On the Roof" until mid Oct. If you'd like more information call Diane.

## THE SOCIAL READJUSTMENT RATING SCALE

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<u>Life Event</u>	<u>Mean Value</u>
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital separation	65
4. Jail term	63
5. Death of close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sex difficulties	39
14. Gain of new family member	39
15. Business readjustment	39
16. Change in financial state	38
17. Death of close friend	37
18. Change to different line work	36
19. Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage over \$10,000	31
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Wife begin or stop work	26
27. Begin or end school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits	24
30. Trouble with boss	23
31. Change in work hours or conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in schools	20
34. Change in recreation	19
35. Change in church activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18
37. Mortgage or loan less than \$10,000	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in number of family get-togethers	15
40. Change eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Christmas	12
43. Minor violations of the law	11

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(Taken from O. Carl Simonton, M.D., Stephanie Matthews-Simonton and James L. Creighton, Getting Well Again (New York: Bantam Books, 1978), pp. 40-41.)

## Needs Assessment, (May, 1982)

Good days for meeting are (circle as many as apply)

SUN. MON. TUES. WED. THURS. FRI. SAT.

Good times for meeting are (circle as many as apply)

7-9 pm 7:30-9:30 pm 8:00-10:00 pm Other \_\_\_\_\_

How old are your dependent children, if any (circle as many as apply)

0-2 yr. 2-5 yr. 6-10 yr. 11-14 yr. 15-18 yr.

Your age? 18-30 yr 31-40 yr 41-50 yr. over 50

Your sex? Male Female

Your current marital status? Hobbies? \_\_\_\_\_

Separated (how long? \_\_\_\_\_)

Divorced (how long? \_\_\_\_\_)

IN MY OPINION, THE MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS OF DIVORCED/SEPARATED CATHOLICS ARE:

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IN MY OPINION, THE MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN ARE:

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Thanks for your help. For further information contact Jenny (626-4047) or Dennis (593-8810). Also, please check the church bulletin regularly.

EVALUATION AND SUGGESTION SHEET

(Please help us by filling in this evaluation form. Thank you)

General evaluation of the meeting was (Circle appropriate number)

(Poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Excellent)

The most helpful things in this meeting/event were:

The least helpful, or unhelpful, things were:

As a result of this experience, I now plan to:

These follow-on meetings would help me :

Other comments, suggestions or criticisms:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Optional)

**PHOENIX GROUP MEETING (Sept 21, 1982)**

Before you break up into groups, try to answer the following. The idea here is to give each person an opportunity to express individual preferences and set down special needs. From these we hope to chart the course for the Phoenix Group during the next session.

- A) As a person this is (these are) the way(s) I would best like to be remembered. Name more than one, if possible, please.
  
- B) These are some of the things/ events that give me most joy in life.
  
- C) These are the things /matters that are of most concern to me at this stage of my life.
  
- D) These are some of the questions that I would most like the Phoenix Group to address/discuss.
  
- E) How well does the Phoenix Group meet my spiritual needs at this time in my life? These are some of my spiritual needs right now.
  
- F) If I had one suggestion to make to the group, this would be it.

LEADER'S EFFECTIVENESS CHECK LIST

Leader's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the number that best describes how you think the leader acted. Numbers to left are for higher rating, to right for lower.

Leader's ATTITUDES to subject, participants, audience were:

Cordial	5	4	3	2	I	Unfriendly
Lively	5	4	3	2	I	Apathetic
Open-minded	5	4	3	2	I	Inflexible
Concerned	5	4	3	2	I	Indifferent

Leader's effectiveness in performing his/her TASKS:

Introduces subject matter clearly	5	4	3	2	I	Fails to stimulate thinking
Focuses discussion	5	4	3	2	I	Lets discussion wander
Speaks only when necessary	5	4	3	2	I	Monopolizes the discussion
Is informed	5	4	3	2	I	Is poorly informed on subject
Adapts to group's interests/needs	5	4	3	2	I	Sticks to outline too much
Introduces relevant material well	5	4	3	2	I	Lets group ignore relevant material
Uses humor well	5	4	3	2	I	Is humorless
Acts democratically	5	4	3	2	I	Dictates procedures too much
Uses visual aids	5	4	3	2	I	Relies on spoken word only
Summarizes often	5	4	3	2	I	Does not summarize
Summarizes only contributions of group	5	4	3	2	I	In summarizing, adds matter from outside group

The leader's LANGUAGE

Fluent	5	4	3	2	I	Hesitant
Fitted occasion	5	4	3	2	I	Inappropriate
Temperate	5	4	3	2	I	Emotionally loaded
Easy to understand	5	4	3	2	I	Hard to understand
Clear	5	4	3	2	I	Poorly enunciated

(Adapted from Pattee, David, and Anderson, Martin P., Discussion-A Guide to Effective Practice. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1963)

TEN COMMANDMENTS  
FOR  
FORMERLY MARRIEDS

- I. Thou shalt not live in the past.
2. Thou shalt be responsible for thy present and not blame thy past.
3. Thou shalt not feel sorry for thyself indefinitely.
4. Thou shalt assume thy end of the blame for thy marriage dissolution.
5. Thou shalt not try to reconcile thy past and reconstruct thy future by a quick, new marriage.
6. Thou shalt not make thy children the victims of thy former marriage.
7. Thou shalt not spend all thy time trying to convince thy children how terrible and evil their departed parent is.
8. Thou shalt learn all thou can about being a one-parent family and get on with it.
9. Thou shalt ask others for help when thou needest it.
10. Thou shalt ask God for the wisdom to bury yesterday, create today and plan for tomorrow.

Jim Smoke, former staff member of the Garden Grove Community Church

(Growing through Divorce Seminars)

Read the passage from Luke's Gospel (5:I-II)

- A. Why do I think that Jesus asked Simon Peter to "Push out a short distance from the shore and lower your nets for a catch"?
- a) To get to know Peter better
  - b) To have a better opportunity to talk to Peter
  - c) To get Peter in a situation where he could not run away
  - d) To teach Peter the value of taking a risk
  - e) To show he knew more about fishing than did Peter and thus gain the upperhand
  - f) (Other response?)
- B. Had I been Peter, I would have done one of the following
- a) Told Jesus I know a lot about fishing
  - b) Suggest that we try the next morning
  - c) Give Jesus a point blank refusal because of the last night's lack of success
  - d) Take him up on his invitation
  - e) Do what he asked but say (or think) that the whole idea is foolish
  - f) (Other response?)
- C. When Peter said, "Leave me, Lord, I am a sinful man", he really meant
- a) I feel guilty being with you
  - b) I really don't think I want you to know the "real me"
  - c) I am scared of getting too involved with you
  - d) Relationships scare me, especially this one
  - e) You make me feel dumb among my friends
  - f) (Other response?)
- D. In comparison to Simon's experience, my own "meetings" with God have been
- a) Tame
  - b) More intellectual
  - c) Just as confusing
  - d) About the same

## PHOENIX GROUP (2/5/83)

- E. The first time I recall feeling God's call in my life was when I was
- a) a child
  - b) In trouble, during a crisis
  - c) Away on retreat
  - d) Don't know for sure
  - e) When I was alone
  - f) All of my life
  - g) Just recently
  - h) Never
  - i) When facing death, or a very big crisis
  - j) (Other response?)
- F. My relationship with God right now could be described this way
- a) Grim
  - b) Confused
  - c) "Blah"
  - d) Growing
  - e) A struggle
  - f) Up and down
  - g) Slipping
  - h) Exciting
  - i) Don't know exactly
  - j) Zero
  - k) (Other response?)
- G. The whole idea of belonging to a group that helps each other grow spiritually sounds
- a) Demanding
  - b) Risky
  - c) Ridiculous
  - d) Just what I need
  - e) Wonderful
  - f) Frightening
  - g) Worthwhile
  - h) O.K., but only if everyone is willing
  - i) (Other response?)
- H. Before I can honestly join in this venture, I need to
- a) First get myself together
  - b) Think it over more
  - c) Consider what it is going to cost
  - d) Straighten out a few things
  - e) Get more help
  - f) Get my relationship with God taken care of first
  - g) Get over my fear of failure
  - h) Clean up my life
  - i) (Other response?)
- I. Return to small groups to share responses.
- J. Use prayer(s) within group before parting.

Adapted from Lyman Coleman, Destiny (Creative Resources, Waco, Texas 1975)

## MINISTRY IN TODAY'S WORLD

The purpose of this presentation is to help us understand our world and ourselves better. Hopefully we can be better ministers if we understand better. The world has its own problems, such as war, famine, inflation. So, too, do our younger generation, our children. They have to cope with peer pressures, drugs, interpersonal relationships and the like. We suffer as well. There are broken marriages, worries about finances, maybe a lack of faith. Whatever it is, we all suffer. We are called, in weakness, to serve each other.

- A. After a brief introduction, hand out the sheet with the three circles. Explain that each circle represents, in turn, our children (the Suffering Generation), our world (the Suffering World) and ourselves (the Suffering Self). Ask them to fill in as many of the arrows as possible. Each arrow represents a pain, a stress, a loss. Ask the people to make the list as close to their experience as possible, as personal as they can.
- B. Have them divide into groups of four or five and share what they have written. It is important to stress that everyone's experience is both unique and communal. Hopefully, this will

help the people realize that they are not alone in their suffering, that they are not being singled out for punishment by an angry God.

C. Give some of the suggestions below, but be sure to allow for discussion. Find out how the group members themselves found ways to understand and to minister in their lives, to the world, their children, to themselves.

D. Some characteristics of the three circles:

1. Suffering World has experienced much change.

Recent wars have divided peoples, set up new boundaries.  
Inflation and unemployment makes it difficult to plan ahead.  
Poverty seems to be getting more widespread.  
Families now much more fragmented...where do you come from?  
People feel uncertain.  
World of Jesus was even worse.  
He embraced the world because He loved.  
Can we love this world?

2. Suffering Generation lacks many things older people took for granted.

Peer pressures are very great. Young people are offered values for now.  
What does the future hold for them?  
High divorce rate frightens them.

Grave doubts about their own future.

Let our own fears be a bridge, not a barrier, to their fears.

Believe in possibility of forgiveness. Read the story of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-).

Look for hope. Read the parable of the mustard seed (Mt 13:31-).

3. The Suffering Self is our story.

We become paralyzed by loneliness.

Once we were in charge, now we feel in the way.

We have less and less time for ourselves.

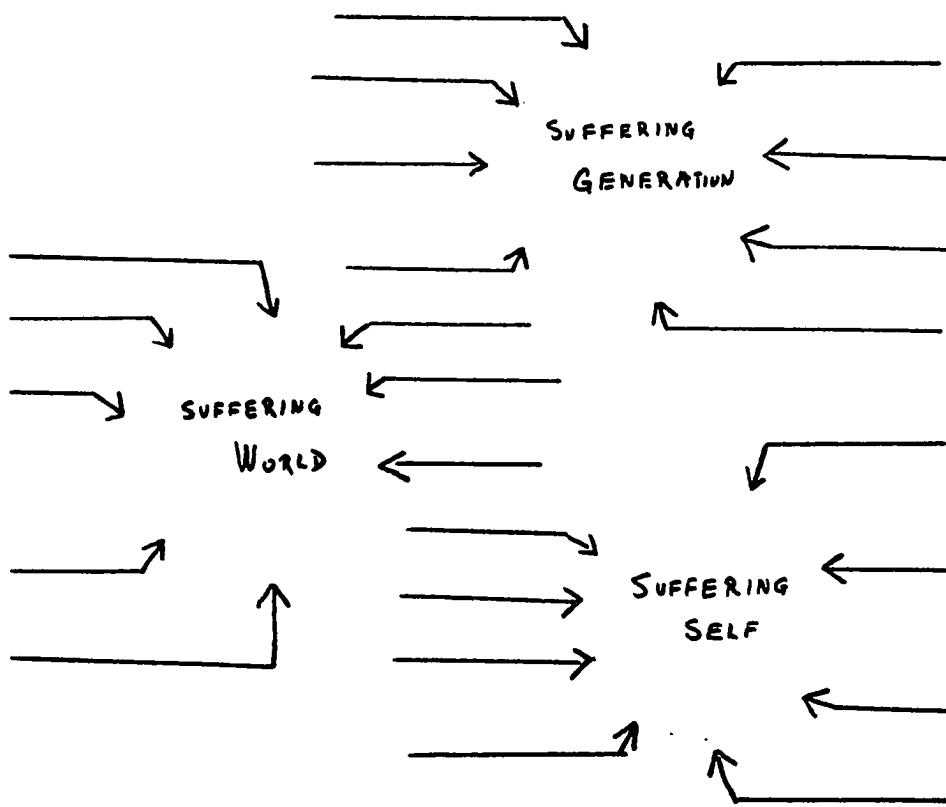
Recognize our own limitations. We cannot answer every call for help.

Can I see any value in my own suffering? Perhaps my pain can make me more aware of another's pain.

Christ through his suffering offers us an opportunity to heal others.

(The above is adapted from Henri Nouwen's, The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society (New York: Image Books, 1979).

## MINISTRY IN TODAY'S WORLD



Fill in the arrows above by listing the troubles that our  
 (1) present-day world experiences, (2) the difficulties our young  
 people face, and (3) the uncertainty and fears that we suffer. Fill  
 in as many as you can.

## FINDING GRACE AT THE CENTER

"Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19)

Listening	}	
Waiting	}	Important in any form of prayer
Attending	)	

## Centering Prayer:

- 1) A beginning
- 2) Focuses attention on God first.
- 3) Seeks Him elsewhere.
- 4) Close eyes - half of world disappears.
- 5) Choose a meaningful word ('God, 'love') Vocative  
And do not strain the imagination.
- 6) Like boats in a river so are our thoughts.  
Let them go by.
- 7) Find a suitable gesture - hands open, fingers towards heavens.
- 8) Distant noises - let them go by like boats.
- 9) Don't pray for self (another time).
- 10) Try not to reflect on what you think.
- 11) Fight the desire to possess.
- 12) Try to be joyful.

## How to begin to Pray:

1. Posture. Be comfortable, as you would be with a friend.
2. Relaxation. Prayer is meant to be relaxing. Stress is a great enemy of prayer. Seek peace in God.
3. Close eyes. Half the world disappears. Prayer is a decision to spend time with God. Keep out distractions.
4. Pray some prayer slowly (e.g., the Our Father)
5. Repeat a word, or a short phrase, over and over.
6. If a distraction comes, turn to centering word.

**Chapter IX: THE SEPARATION OF SPOUSES**

**Article 1: THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BOND**

Can. 1095 - A ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any cause other than death.

Can. 1096 - A non-consummated marriage between baptized persons or between a baptized party and a non-baptized party can be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff for a just cause, at the request of both parties or at the request of one of the parties, even if the other party is unwilling.

Can. 1097 - #1. A marriage entered by two non-baptized persons is dissolved by means of the Pauline privilege in favor of the faith of a party who has received baptism. This dissolution occurs ipso facto when a new marriage is contracted by the party who has been baptized, provided the non-baptized party departs.

#2. The non-baptized party is considered to have departed if he or she does not wish to cohabit with the baptized party or does not wish to cohabit in peace without insult to the Creator; unless, after receiving baptism, the baptized party gave the other party cause for departure.

Can. 1098 - #1. In order for the baptized party to contract a new marriage validly, the non-baptized party must always be interrogated on the following points ("interpellations"):

- 1) whether he or she also wishes to receive baptism;
- 2) whether he or she at least wishes to cohabit in peace with the baptized party without insult to the Creator.

#2. This interrogation must take place after baptism. For serious cause, however, the local Ordinary can permit this interrogation to take place before the baptism. He can likewise even dispense from this interrogation either before or after the baptism, provided it is evident from the results of at least a summary and extra-judicial process that the interrogation cannot take place or that it would be useless.

Can. 1099 - #1. As a rule, the interrogation should take place on the authority of the converted party's local Ordinary. If the other spouse asks for a period of time during which to answer, the same Ordinary is to grant it while warning the party that after this period has elapsed without any answer, the person's silence will be considered to be a negative answer.

(Unauthorised translation of new Code of Canon Law. Source unknown.)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

All books listed are available through  
the Public Library. This  
listing does not imply endorsement  
of the author's ideas.

### 1. General Divorce Related

THE COURAGE TO DIVORCE, Susan Gettleman & Janet Markowitz  
Ballantine, New York, 1974

Deals with divorce from a societal perspective  
and explores myths and stereotypes of divorce.  
Deals with the problems of post-divorce life  
and step-families. Quoted from the book...  
"We would infer that people's motives for di-  
vorcing are probably sounder and healthier than  
their initial motives for marrying."

CREATIVE DIVORCE, Mel Krantzler  
Signet, New York, 1973

An excellent book that deals with divorce as  
an opportunity for personal growth. Guidelines  
are offered for adjusting to the realities of  
divorce, explaining divorce to children and  
forming new commitments.

DIVORCE AND AFTER, edited by Paul Bohannan  
Anchor books (paperback), 1971

Discussion of the emotional and moral contract  
between husband and wife. Contributors from  
sociology, anthropology, psychology, medicine  
and law included.

THE DIVORCE EXPERIENCE, Morton Hunt and Bernice Hunt  
McGraw-Hill, 1977

*Descriptive and interpretative of the problems  
of the just separated and recently divorced.  
It examines in intimate detail the world of the  
formerly married, their customs, problems and  
life styles.*

DIVORCE: THE NEW FREEDOM, Esther Oshiver Fisher  
Harper and Row, 1974

*A guide to divorcing and divorce counseling.  
Discusses three separate and distinct phases  
in the divorce process: pre-divorce counseling,  
coping with legal and emotional strains of  
divorce, post-divorce adjustment.*

DIVORCED IN AMERICA, Joseph Epstein  
E. P. Dutton & Co., 1974

*A personal account of divorce beyond the legal  
and emotional concerns. It defines both the  
personal crises and the social institution of  
divorce.*

THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE, Jessie Bernard  
Bantam Books, 1973

*Good book on the roles in a marriage relationship  
and the problems of marriage.*

HOW TO PARENT ALONE, Joan Bel Geddes  
Seabury Press, 1976

*Commonsense advice on coping with emotions and  
self-confidence as they relate to the problem  
areas of being a single parent. Presented warmly  
and often humorously.*

I COUNT, YOU COUNT, George Calden  
Argus Communications, Niles, Illinois, 1976

*A self-help book on improving relationships through good communication.*

MARITAL SEPARATION, Robert S. Weiss  
Basic Books, 1975

*Contains accounts of personal experiences of those whose marriages have ended. Brings out understanding of the specific stresses and difficulties encountered by separated people.*

PARENTS BOOK ABOUT DIVORCE, Richard A. Gardner  
Doubleday & Co., 1977

*A psychiatrist gives realistic guidance for parents' difficulties with children of divorce. Positive approach and comprehensive treatment of complex issues involved.*

SHIFTING GEARS, George and Nena O'Neil  
Avon, 1974

*Excellent book on coping with change.*

UNCOUPLING - THE ART OF COMING APART, Marya Mannes and Norman Sheresky, Viking Press, 1972

*Informative book on marriage contracts, lawyers, property divisions, custody, etc.*

THE HALF PARENT, Brenda Maddox  
O. M. Evans Co., New York

*Good book dealing with legal questions of step-parenting and step-parent/step-child relationships.*

STEPCHILD IN THE FAMILY, Ann Simon  
Odessey Press, Inc.

*Informative book dealing with the feelings of being a stepchild and the fears of relating to step-siblings and step-parents.*

THE SUCCESSFUL STEP-PARENT, Helen Thomson  
Harper & Row, 1966

*Informative book concerning the problems of relating to step-children.*

## 2. Special Interest - Men

FATHERS AND CUSTODY, Ira Victor and Ann Winkler  
Hawthorn Books, 1977

*Presents the situations of both the visiting and custodial parent. Shows how each situation can be beneficial to children and fathers. Extensive list of resources listed in book, including information regarding legal problems and support groups.*

ONE MAN, HURT, Albert Martin  
MacMillan Publishing Co., 1975

*A personal account of a man who didn't want a divorce after 18 years of marriage. It is an account of the 18 months following the separation struggling to save the marriage.*

PART-TIME FATHER, Edith Atkin and Estelle Rubin  
Vanguard Press, 1976

*Guide for divorced fathers. Gives a description*

*of the process of learning how it feels to be a father when you do not live with your children. Part of the book discusses custodial fathers and divided custody arrangements.*

**THE SECOND-TIME SINGLE MAN'S SURVIVAL HANDBOOK, 1975**  
William J. Gordon and Steven D. Price, Praeger Publisher

*Good advice for newly single men who are bewildered or overwhelmed by the logistical problems of surviving "the domestic mysteries."*

**WHAT'S A FATHER FOR?, Sara D. Gilbert**  
Parent's Magazine Press, 1975

*Deals with cultural role of fathers. How fathers have been hindered in the past from being active parents. The role of the father in more parenting involvement.*

### **3. Special Interest - Women**

**CREATIVE SURVIVAL FOR SINGLE MOTHERS, Persia Woolley**  
Celestial Arts Press, Millbrae, California

*Good general guide to life as a single mother.  
Quite readable.*

**THE DIVORCED MOTHER'S GUIDE, Lynn Forman**  
Berkeley Publishing Corp., 1974

*Very readable, light book on pulling life together after divorce. Deals with children, self, career, dating, friendships.*

LIFE AFTER MARRIAGE, Mary Ann Singleton  
Stein & Day, 1974

A how-to and why-to guide for building a different and possibly better life after divorce. Practical, informational, readable on all subjects relating to single women.

MAMA DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE, Judy Sullivan  
Pyramid Press

Deals with a mother's emotions and decision to leave her husband and 12 year old daughter. An autobiographical account of the changes she experienced.

THE SECOND WIFE, Jean Baer  
Doubleday, New York

Very good book for women regarding the problems involved in second marriages. Discusses how to deal with the former wife, the role of the step-parent and stress situations in second marriages.

WHAT EVERY FORMERLY MARRIED WOMAN SHOULD KNOW,  
Louise Athearn, McKay Co., New York, 1973

Good book for divorced women dealing with starting a new life, remarriage, interpersonal relationships, dating and sexuality.

#### 4. Finances and Law

WHAT A WOMAN NEEDS TO KNOW, Barbara Hirsch  
Bantam Books, 1973

*Good book on legal matters of divorce, including what to expect in court.*

EVERYWOMAN'S GUIDE TO FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE,  
Mavis A. Groza, Les Femmes Publisher, Millbrae, Cal.

*Good book on credit, budgeting, insurance, resources. Has a good bibliography. Quoted from the book, "It is time for us to learn to keep ourselves -- to become financially independent."*

I'VE HAD IT, YOU'VE HAD IT!, Henry Baskin and Sonya Kiel-Friedman

*Interesting book dealing with legal questions of divorce in a question and answer format.*

SYLVIA PORTER'S MONEY BOOK, Sylvia Porter  
Doubleday, New York, 1975

*A good reference on all money matters. Volume I deals with everyday money matters, cash, checking, etc. Volume II deals with housing, marriage, family, divorce economics, investments, consumer's rights and more.*

## 5. Children's Interest

A BOOK FOR JODAN, Marcia Newfield  
Atheneum, New York, 1975

A book for young school-age children. It is quite readable and contemporary in terms of little sex-stereotyping. Portrays a young girl used to having two involved parents, dealing with separation and divorce. She wonders why they must separate, if she caused it, and if they will get together again. Her dad makes a scrapbook that helps her accept everything.

THE BOYS AND GIRLS BOOK ABOUT DIVORCE, Richard Gardner  
Bantam, New York, 1970

A good readable book for fifth grade children and older dealing with children's feelings about divorce, problems with custody, visitation, and remarriage of parents.

A FRIEND CAN HELP, Terry Berger  
Raintree Editions

A young girl whose parents do not live together acquires strength and self-esteem from her relationship with a good friend with whom she can talk things over.

HOW TO GET IT TOGETHER WHEN YOUR PARENTS ARE COMING APART  
Arlene Richards and Irene Willis, David McKay Co.

Very readable for teenagers. Forthright book, parents may want to read first as it openly deals with sexual relationships, drugs, alcohol. A what to do book dealing with children's feelings when parents are not getting along; living through the separation and divorce. How friends react, parents, dating, visitation, remarriage, step-parents, step-siblings.

IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD, Judy Blume  
Bradbury Press

*Good book for school-age children, 4-8 grades.  
Deals with a sixth grade girl's reaction to her  
parents divorce and her final acceptance of the  
divorce.*

MATT GARGAN'S BOY, Alfred Slote  
Lippincott, 1975

*Readable book for late elementary, middle-school  
age child. Deals with 12 year old boy's feelings  
about his parents' divorce and his hopes of getting  
them back together.*

ME DAY, Joan Lexau  
Dial Press, 1971

*Book for young children, pre-school and early  
school age. This book deals with a young boy's  
anger and other feelings about his parent's divorce.*

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS, Rose Blue  
Watts, New York, 1972

*A child's adjustment to living with a single  
parent and having a visiting father. From the  
book, "Even if your folks split, you've got to  
stay together."*

ME AND MR. STENNER, Evan Hunter  
J. B. Lippincott Co., 1976

*Easy story to follow of an 11-year old girl who  
learns that she can love her step-father and her  
real father at the same time when her mother  
remarries. Contains upper-middle class situa-  
tions, with the 11-year old being quite precocious.*

MY DAD LIVES IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL, Peggy Mann  
Doubleday, New York

Good, easy reading about a young boy's experiences from the beginning of the divorce action to adjustment and acceptance. Quoted from the book, "When I got to school that morning, I wondered if anyone would notice anything different. I sure felt different."

A SMART KID LIKE YOU, Stella Pevsner  
Seabury Press, New York

A book for school-age children, 4-8 grade. Concerns a 12 year old girl's adjustments to divorce and parent's remarriage.

TALKING ABOUT DIVORCE, Earl Grollman  
Beacon Press, 1975

Book written for parents and children to read together concerning the feelings and happenings of divorce. Includes a chapter for parents.

TO LIVE A LIFE, Anne Alexander  
Atheneum Press, 1955

Very readable book for 4-7 grade child. Concerns a girl whose mother goes to college while children live with father. She lies about her mother -- says she is dead -- doesn't acknowledge divorce.

TWO SPECIAL CARDS, Sonia O. Lisker and Leigh Dean  
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich

Very good book for preschool and early school-age children. Concerns an 8 year old girl's reaction to her parents divorce and visits with her father. The book emphasizes the positive aspects of divorce.